YES, AMEND THE CONSTITUTION
ROBERT H. BORK

the weekly
Standard

MARCH 3, 1997 $2.95

A RETURN TO NATIONAL GREATNESS

by DAVID BROOKS

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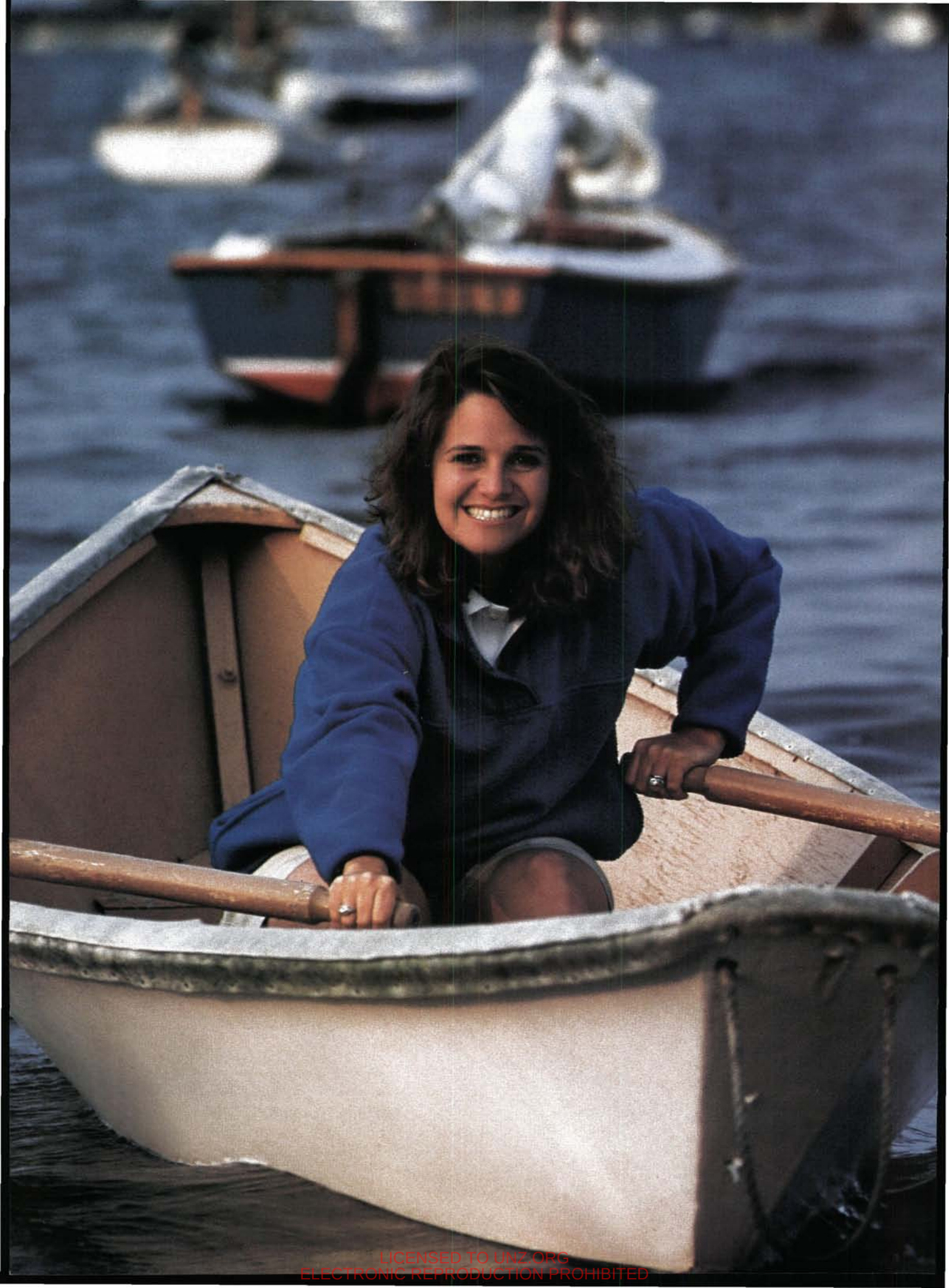

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NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 24 • MARCH 3, 1997

4 SCRAPBOOK

6 CASUAL
William Kristol remembers an American humorist.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

11 EDITORIAL
A Wild Week with Kenneth Starr

12 WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY, KENNETH?
Conservatives are no longer Starr-struck. *by* **Tod Lindberg**

14 JUDGING THE JUDGES
Will the GOP take on Clinton's nominees? *by* **Matthew Rees**

40 PARODY
Enlightened Soft Money

Cover photograph by Michael Dersin

16 A RETURN TO NATIONAL GREATNESS
A manifesto for a lost creed. *by* **David Brooks**

21 AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION
Why conservatives should not be afraid to amend. *by* **Robert H. Bork**

24 BIG GOVERNMENT BY STEALTH
With cat-like tread, Bill Clinton is bringing it back. *by* **Irwin M. Stelzer**

26 A DEFENSE AGENDA FOR SEC. COHEN
Come up with a strategy; fix civil-military relations. *by* **Eliot A. Cohen & A. J. Bacevich**

Books & Arts

31 THE PRESS BARONESS The dynastic destiny of Katharine Graham. *by* **Noemie Emery**

34 MULTI-*KULTI* The rotten pedigree of American declinism. *by* **Fred Siegel**

36 MORE ABORTIONS, PLEASE! Enlightened by a fanatic. *by* **Francis X. Rocca**

37 WE'RE SITTING DUCKS Weinberger's right—but why the agitprop? *by* **Lawrence F. Kaplan**

38 WALLOWING IN THE CRUD At peace with American architecture. *by* **Steven Lagerfeld**

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly, except for the first week of January and the third week of July, by News America Publishing Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $79.96; Canadian, $99.96; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: The Weekly Standard, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930. Copyright 1996, News America Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a trademark of News America Publishing Incorporated.

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Pat Sajak on the Lost Sayings of Deng

On Feb. 19, China's 92-year-old "paramount leader," Deng Xiaoping, died. Many news organizations quoted his most famous aphorism, spoken during an argument with Mao over farm policies: "Whether a cat is black or white makes no difference. As long as it catches mice, it is a good cat." Pat Sajak writes to the SCRAPBOOK, "One can only stand in awe in the presence of such insight, and search for meaning in some of Deng's lesser-known quotations," which Mr. Sajak has helpfully collected for us. Highlights include:

IT IS NOT THE HEIGHT OF THE GIRAFFE THAT MAKES IT GREAT. IT IS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ITS HEAD AND ITS FEET.

THE HEAT IS NOT NEARLY AS IMPORTANT AS IS THE HUMIDITY.

THE CHILD MUST BE WARY IN ALL SITUATIONS LEST HE PUT AN EYE OUT.

WE MUST KNOW THE FUTURE. IT IS WHERE WE WILL SPEND THE BULK OF OUR DAYS.

ONE CANNOT REBROADCAST WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN CONSENT OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.

WHEN A MAN DOES SOMETHING AND IT HURTS, HE SHOULD NOT DO THAT.

IT IS GOOD TO BE POOR AND MEEK AND HUMBLE, THOUGH BEING PARAMOUNT LEADER IS PROBABLY BETTER.

Jane Fonda Strikes Out

Imagine Mike Murphy's excitement when he received a personal letter, on recycled paper, from Jane Fonda. "Dear Michael, I have a humongous favor to ask you," the former Barbarella wrote to Murphy, the Republican media whiz who worked on the Alexander and Dole campaigns. It seems that Fonda chairs a campaign run by Husband Ted's Turner Foundation to reduce teen pregnancy in Georgia. "We know that hope is the best contraceptive [!!!], so we are replicating programs that help young people and their parents start small businesses," she writes. The humongous favor she asks is that Murphy attend a premiere of the movie *Batman and Robin* in Atlanta. It seems that the stars of the movie will all be overseas, so Ms. Fonda is hoping the stars of previous Batman movies might make it to Atlanta for a Batman reunion.

Ms. Fonda makes clear that she knows her husband's hometown is a bit of a cow pasture: "This is a big deal in Atlanta which hasn't had glamorous premieres since *Gone with the Wind.*" Indeed, Atlanta is so starved for glamor that, as Fonda adds, "the town went wild!" at last year's *Twister* premiere. She promises that Murphy won't have to be stuck there long: "You would be out the next day . . . back to wherever you wanted to be."

Murphy responded on paper that does not appear to be recycled. "It sounds like a cool event. And I am flattered by the offer to fly me to Atlanta," he says. But the problem is that this Mike Murphy was never in any Batman movies. That was the other Michael Murphy, the actor. "I'm tempted to show up anyway," the GOP Murphy continues, "but it would probably be a mistake. I'd be standing there with all the *Batman* cast members, and somebody might notice that I wasn't in any of the movies. I could tell 'em I was the guy in the penguin suit or something, but we better play it safe. And who knows what would happen if I had a few too many glasses of free champagne. Whitewater or Newt or Hanoi could come up, and well, let's just say it's probably best for everybody that I decline."

Another great meeting of the minds goes by the boards.

Another Clinton Whopper

President Clinton sat for an extended interview with editors and reporters from the *Boston Globe* last week. The paper described the president as "uncharacteristically on edge, his face occasionally growing red." He was being quizzed about the fund-raising scandals now engulfing his party. And he was asked why he hadn't placed stricter rules on future Democratic money-grubbing.

"Now can you explain to me how that will be setting a moral example if I made the Democrats even more vulnerable than they are now?" Clinton sputtered. Interesting morality, that: What's bad for the Democratic party, apparently, cannot be moral. But the president was only getting started. He grew "visibly angered." He asked the *Globe* to "show me one case where I compromised the

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Scrapbook

public interest for a special interest." Okay: How about when your White House let a Chinese arms merchant into the Oval Office at the behest of a party donor, Mr. President?

Clinton wasn't biting. "We know that we did not raise as much foreign money . . . as the other party does," he said. This is fabulously false. No one has so far accused the Republican party of raising a single dime of illegal money from foreign nationals, as the DNC seems quite clearly to have done on more than one occasion.

Several hours after his *Globe* interview, Clinton spoke at a fund-raising dinner for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in New York City. He praised the party's $25,000 "soft-money" contributors for joining him despite "knowing you might be targeted for the exercise of your constitutional right to stand up and support" Democrats with cash. Practically in the next breath, Clinton asked the same contributors to help get the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance-reform legislation passed. That bill, our readers know, would gut the constitutional right the president had just finished celebrating.

Welfare Beats Working

If only there were jobs—that's been the liberal lament for decades on why so many of the poor linger on welfare. Sociologist William Julius Williams created a cottage industry with books and articles blaming the bulging welfare rolls on the absence of jobs. But President Clinton, visiting New York's leftie Riverside Church, found there's more to the story. Take a low-level job? Not a chance, welfare recipient Nilda Roman told Clinton. Making people work for benefits is "like a form of slavery," she said. Those sent to work in mental hospitals face the "most treacherous, most horrible places in the world." Worse, some must work as janitors. "I've seen women clean the toilets, and it's horrible and demeaning," she said. Clinton was thunderstruck. The best he could come up with was that students on welfare shouldn't be pulled out of college.

Gajdusek Guilty

Nobel scientist Carleton Gajdusek, whose travel diaries were the subject of a special report by Claudia Winkler in our Oct. 7, 1996, issue, negotiated a settlement with the prosecutor last week. Gajdusek pleaded guilty to two counts involving sexual contact with one of his adopted sons from Micronesia, and in a signed statement he admitted sexual contact with a second teenage Micronesian in his care. In exchange for the plea, state and federal authorities agreed to end all further investigations into his activities. Now 73, Gajdusek will spend nine months to a year in a Frederick County, Md., jail, followed by five years' probation during which he will be free to leave the country.

Correction

An item in our Feb. 24 Scrapbook, "Good News for CCRI," unwittingly made the good news sound better than it was. We suggested that one of Judge Thelton Henderson's two edicts blocking California's new anti-preferences law had been overturned. Not quite. An appeals panel declined to take that step and instead took what could prove to be a bigger one: assuming future jurisdiction of the entire case from Henderson—while criticizing his reasoning from the bench.

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Casual

L*E*O R*O*S*T*E*N, RIP

Leo Rosten and Deng Xiaoping died last Wednesday. Rosten was four years younger than Deng, and a lot funnier.

He was famous for *The Joys of Yiddish*, and well known for several other works of fiction and nonfiction. But for me, Leo Rosten will always be the creator of Hyman Kaplan—that is, of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N. Kaplan was a Depression-era immigrant, a night-school student who mangled the English language and chose to sign his name in capital letters separated by asterisks.

Rosten's Kaplan first appeared in the pages of the *New Yorker* in 1935. I came across him as a teenager in the 1960s because my parents happened to have around the house a couple of collections of the stories—*The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N* (published in 1937) and *The Return of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N* (1959).

The Kaplan books were favorites of my early adolescence. (I had graduated from Clair Bee's terrific Chip Hilton sports series, and had not yet embraced Allen Drury's gripping political novels.) I reread the stories this week after learning of Rosten's death, and found myself laughing out loud 30 years later.

Admittedly, I'm an easy touch for a certain kind of comic writing (I tend to believe that Donald E. Westlake is America's greatest living novelist). And to enjoy the Kaplan stories, it probably helps to have had immigrant grandparents, and to have been raised in New York. But I've got to think that any American who shares my somewhat juvenile sense of humor—and, after all, many Americans do—would love to meet Hyman Kaplan.

Here's a sample from one story, "The Death of Julius Caesar." The long-suffering teacher of Kaplan's night-school class, Mr. Parkhill (known to Kaplan as "Mr. Pockheel"), decides to introduce his students to "the greatest master English has ever known," William Shakespeare. Kaplan is thrilled: "Must be some progriss ve makink! . . . Imachine! . . . Villiam Jakesbeer!"

After (yet again) correcting Kaplan's pronunciation, Mr. Parkhill writes on the board the famous "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" passage from *Macbeth*. He asks the students to recite the poem and explain it. Miss Caravello goes first:

"'Da poem isa gooda! . . . Itsa have beautiful wordsa, *bella*, lak great musica anda deepa, deepa philosophy. Shakespeare isa lak Alighieri Dante, da greatest Italiano—'

"'Vhat?!' bristled Mr. Kaplan. 'Shakesbeer you compare mit Dante? *Shakesbeer*?! Ha!'"

Mr. Parkhill defends Miss Caravello's right to her opinion. But Kaplan retorts: "How ken she compare a ginius like Shakesbeer mit a dantist like Dante?!"

After further heated exchanges between other students and Kaplan, who has made himself Shakespeare's great defender, Mr. Parkhill feels increasingly dizzy and despairing. Then Kaplan finally gets to declaim:

"'Fallow lovers of fine literature. Edmirers of immortable poyetry.'

"'Immortal,' Mr. Parkhill put in."

After various corrections and diversions, Kaplan gets to the point, with an interpretation of "dose marvelous words" of "Julius Scissor." He explains that in this monologue an anxious Caesar is thinking: "'Oh, how de time goes slow, fromm day to day, like leetle tsyllables on phonograph racords of time.'"

Overriding Mr. Parkhill's objections, Kaplan continues his gripping *explication de texte* of the monologue: "'Life is like a bum actor, strottink an' hollerink arond de stage for vun hour bafore he's kicked ot! *Life?* Ha! It's a pail full of idjots.'

"'No, *no!* A *"tale"* not a *"pail"*—'

"'—full of funny sonds an' phooey!'

"'Sound and fury!' cried the frantic tutor.

"'Life is monkey business! It don't minn a t'ing! It singleflies nottink!' . . . Den Julius closes his ice fest'—Mr. Kaplan demonstrated Caesar's exact ocular process by closing his own 'ice'—'an' drops dad!'"

Of course, Mr. Parkhill has to tell Kaplan that the monologue isn't from *Julius Caesar*. But like Mr. Parkhill, I've never been able to read Act V of *Macbeth* without for a moment imagining myself in a tent outside Rome, "where 'Julius Scissor,' cursed with insomnia, had pondered time and life, and philosophized himself to a strange and sudden death."

Leo Rosten loved Hyman Kaplan and his fellow Americanizing immigrants. He loved America. He would have cheered David Brooks's call in this issue for a return to national greatness.

And he knew that American humor is part of American greatness. For he saw that there should be something peculiarly cheerful and upbeat about American patriotism, about the spirit of a nation of immigrants, founded in liberty. Deng Xiaoping wouldn't have understood.

WILLIAM KRISTOL

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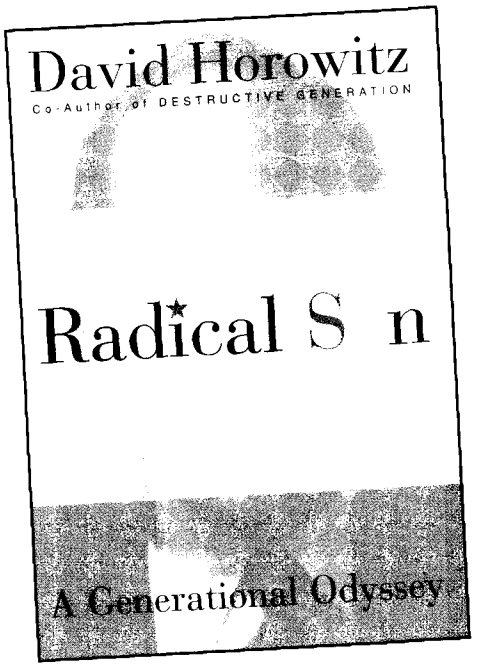
"The First Great American Autobiography of This Generation."

—George Gilder, Author of *Wealth and Poverty*



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Though it is really a lovestory—one man becomes passionately enamored of freedom, responsibility, and reason. Or maybe it's a book about faith healing, a true account of how belief in human dignity and individual rights cures blindness, folly, and hatred. Anyway, everyone who was ever involved with or influenced by the New Left should read David Horowitz's words, and then eat their own. I think the last political book that affected me this strongly was Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*."

—P. J. O'Rourke

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—Mark Falcoff, *American Spectator*

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—*New York Times* Book Review

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

David Horowitz is the bestselling co-author of *The Rockefellers* and *The Kennedys*, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and co-editor of *Heterodoxy*.

Published by The Free Press, *Radical Son* is available at local bookstores everywhere; or call 800-752-6562 to order copies.

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Flynt Stoning

Kudos to Matt Labash for his fine work in "The Truth vs. Larry Flynt" (Feb. 17). Labash paints a chilling picture of Flynt. I had always seen him as an abysmal character, but I had no idea that the abyss was so deep.

It is curious that Oliver Stone, the darling of the Hollywood Left, would choose to make a man such as Larry Flynt the object of admiration. The Left has long been comprised of women's groups. Flynt, however, has made millions of dollars exploiting women in ways that decent people find unimaginable. Images of female genital mutilation and dismemberment, as well as the glorification of child pornography, have been Flynt's trade. He has contributed to our culture by setting new standards of depravity.

With full knowledge of Larry Flynt's abominable life, Stone chose to portray him as a towering arbiter of the First Amendment. I can think of no instance that more clearly illustrates the unqualified ideological bankruptcy of Stone and his ilk than Stone's attempt to sanitize a bottom-feeder such as Larry Flynt.

DALE E. WEEKS
LOUISVILLE, KY

Matt Labash's piece regarding just how disgusting Larry Flynt really is may inadvertently result in comforting those embracing an absurd interpretation of the First Amendment. We readily concede that Flynt is reprehensible and vile. But it may be argued that his repulsiveness is a true test of our First Amendment. A Larry Flynt should not be allowed to hide behind the First Amendment. He is not a defender of our civil rights—only a barbarian who deserves our contempt.

DAVID THOMSON
HOUSTON, TX

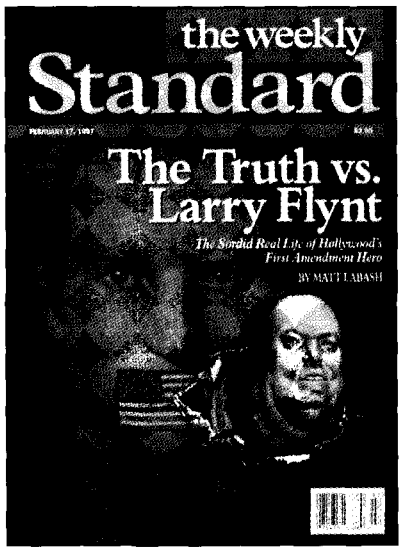
In Pinning, Truth

Tucker Carlson got it exactly right in "Emasculating the Marines (Feb. 17). He also struck a responsive chord in folks who serve in the other services.

The shrillest voices raised about this practice have come from a media and political elite that were largely successful in avoiding any military service whatsoever. Carlson is correct: Some of military life is about suffering and distress and pain and endurance—that's what it takes to win wars. Against this backdrop, it's laughable when all these hand-wringers try to be taken seriously on the subject of hazing.

I got my blood wings after completing a U.S. Army air-assault course five years ago. It wasn't exactly enjoyable, but I'm sure there are a lot of guys out there like me for whom the momentary pain was absolutely nothing compared with the really tough times we endured during Army service.

JEFF NELLIGAN
BETHESDA, MD



With conservatives like Tucker Carlson running around, who needs liberals? He thinks that rules don't matter if something "good" is being accomplished. Second, he has a Clancy-esque view of the military in which honor, duty, and fidelity seem to come as naturally as breathing. This is just as bad as the leftists who see nothing but evil in military endeavor. Even the title of his article is a manifestation of hysteria.

Ultimately, one of the main reasons that conservatives should see the seriousness of rituals like "blood pinning" is that such rituals need to be kept secret. Anyone who has contemplated why things go wrong should be able to figure out, as Justice Brandeis did, that "sunshine is the best disinfectant."

CHARLES LOUKUS
GLEN BURNIE, MD

The Fractal Effects

David Frum's excellent review of Henry Turner Ashby's *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power* (Feb. 17) contains the seed of a powerful new insight that needs to be recognized, especially by conservatives.

Frum writes that Ashby's book "powerfully affirms the truth of individual moral responsibility in history." Students of history and politics should know that science too provides fundamental backing for this view. The essential underpinning is provided by IBM scientist Benoit Mandlebrot's *Fractal Geometry of Nature*. The fractal view of nature (including man) generalizes Lorenz's "butterfly effect." Lorenz found that (to paraphrase) the beating of a butterfly's wings in Brazil could possibly induce a tornado in Texas. What is seemingly less consequential than the beating of a butterfly's wings?

Many Americans now think similarly: What is less politically consequential than their voting? Ashby's history helps to answer this question. Mandlebrot's fractals answer the question more generally with art (as in fractal-art wall calendars) as well as with the science (mathematics and evidence) of dynamic systems.

The basis for a "new" conservative ethic focused upon individual responsibility exists. It is far more encompassing, powerful, and revolutionary than the liberal view or any supposedly revolutionary theory that has risen since the Enlightenment.

PETER BEARSE
GLOUCESTER, MA

Ciao, First Amendment

David Tell and the editors are shocked that the country's pundits haven't vigorously reacted to the "putrid" proposal of congressional Democratic leaders that the First Amendment be abridged to allow Congress the power to regulate political speech ("Is Free Speech Outdated?,"

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Feb. 17). Here is an idea that would remedy that deplorable lack of interest and be of great value to the Republic as well: If Democrats are determined to gut the core meaning of the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment, then Republicans should propose an amendment abrogating or amending the Press Clause of the First Amendment.

What too many commentators and politicians fail to realize is that if political parties and private individuals and groups are restricted in their political speech, then the necessary and inescapable corollary is that the power of the media, already intolerable, will grow immeasurably. Are Republicans and conservatives so confident in the objectivity and goodwill of Washington-based columnists, network anchors, newspaper bureau chiefs, magazine "reporters," and media critics that they are willing to substantially surrender the right to communicate outside of the channels people like this control?

Traditionally, Republicans and conservatives have had to rely on intense paid-media efforts to get their ideas and messages through at election time. If Daschle-Gephardt were ever to be ratified, Republicans and conservatives would have little power to pierce the countervailing worldview and assumptions of a hostile media. We can only fear what would happen when what little balance paid-media achieve is prohibited.

In this much heralded age of "bipartisanship," let this be the first breach, the first partisan issue. If the Democrats want to muzzle the man in Peoria, then let the Republicans pull the plug on the studios, soundstages, and press rooms.

NATHANIEL T. TRELEASE
CHEYENNE, WY

ANOTHER TAKE ON SEXISM

Regarding "White House Sexism" (Scrapbook, Feb. 17): The comment about what would happen to a conservative Republican press secretary if he had said what Mike McCurry said begs a question. Would a conservative president have given consideration to appointing a woman to the office of secretary of state in the first place?

DAVID J. MANN
CONCORD, CA

NOT-SO-SMILING IRISH EYES

In "Gerry Rigged" (Feb. 10), Stuart Reid parodies Anatole France, who observed that the law in its majesty equally forbids the rich man and the poor man to steal a loaf of bread. The Frenchman was consciously ironic. Reid is unconsciously so when he observes that the law limiting the franchise in Northern Ireland to owners of real property applied to Catholics and Protestants alike. So it was a mere accident that for hundreds of years Catholics had been forbidden by law to own land in Ireland, and that most of them in the North still do not.

Reid gives advice to Catholics: "The border is open." In other words, if you don't like it, get out. How evenhanded. Of a united Ireland, he says in conclusion: "Nobody wants it." But the local elections last year showed that Catholic support is going increasingly to Sinn Fein.

JUAN J. RYAN
NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ

CRYPTO-RIGHT-WINGERS

I have just read your snide swipe at Scientology (Scrapbook, Feb. 10). You are badly misled if you think Scientology is anything but a highly conservative organization.

I am a Scientologist, and I can tell you that we have had it with false press. I will not contribute a dime to you or anybody else who attacks, no matter how covertly, my religion. To add insult, you opt to side with the nation that loosed Marx, Wagner, and Wundt on the world.

MIKE SMITH
PALM COAST, FL

PALO ALTO AIN'T ALL THAT

I couldn't help but gasp at the one extraordinary sentence in Chris Caldwell's otherwise unobjectionable article "Bright College Days" (Feb. 10): "Yes, Palo Alto is one of the better college towns I have ever been in."

I've visited a dozen or so college towns, in addition to the major cities that have colleges, and I can honestly say that aside from Irving, Texas, and Claremont, California, I've never encountered a drearier, less lively, and less intellectually stimulating community than Palo Alto. And I lived there for four years.

What troubles me most about Caldwell's embrace of Palo Alto is that the town so clearly fails to meet his own criteria for what makes college towns so wonderful: "bookstores, theaters, museums, bars, and a social life revolving around sherry, tea, and literary bloviation."

Aside from Chimera, there are no quality used bookstores in Palo Alto, and the regular bookstores are just larger versions of chain stores. As for theaters, museums, and bars, Palo Alto is unremarkable on the first count, nonexistent (except for Stanford's museum) on the second, and downright insulting on the third. On the whole, the intellectual atmosphere on campus suffers outside of class. Students at Stanford are not there because there are 10 million books in the library, but because the degree tends to impress human-resource directors at Microsoft and Goldman Sachs. When the working day is done, students want to engage in trivial pursuits, a fact Caldwell observed.

Although I am partial to a few college towns, the best "college town" is right here in Washington, D.C. True, it has some problems on the urban decay front, and the bloviation is almost exclusively of the political rather than of the literary variety, but such weaknesses pale in comparison with the astonishing strengths. With all of Washington's abundant cultural amenities, it's no wonder Caldwell chooses to live here.

MICHAEL R. NEWMAN
WASHINGTON, DC

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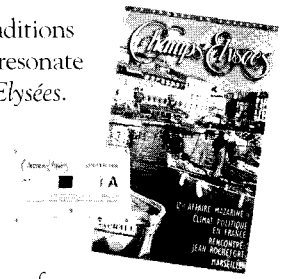

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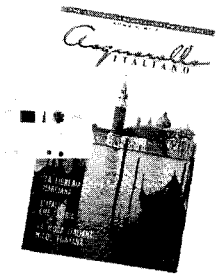

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the weekly Standard

A Wild Week with Kenneth Starr

Early last week, independent counsel Kenneth Starr announced that, come August 1, he would no longer be able to represent the United States of America in the Whitewater matter and associated investigations. He insisted his decision did not signal what such decisions usually signal: that the lawyer has lost faith in his client. In fact, Starr came close to saying he thought the country—because we have a "rule of law and not of individual men and women"—might actually be better off for his departure. In any case, his *new* client would certainly be better off, and could not be expected to wait for him more than another couple of months. Pepperdine University is opening a "brand-new school of public policy that will be admitting students for the coming academic year," and it "needs a founding dean." This is Kenneth Starr's dream job, apparently, so much a "once in a lifetime opportunity" as to trump—in his own mind, at least initially—his present obligations.

Late in the week, after fierce public criticism, Starr reversed himself and pledged to remain at his post until his investigation and any resulting prosecutions of high officials are substantially completed. Good. The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia did *not* hire the "rule of law" embodied by the office Kenneth Starr administers. It hired *him*. And it hired him to make awesome ultimate decisions about the need for criminal prosecutions of high government officials—up to and including the president.

This is a precious trust to invest in a man, and having accepted the responsibility, he could not honorably jettison it—and certainly not out of preference for some nifty university gig in Malibu, California.

Unfortunately, Starr cannot entirely undo the damage he has inflicted on the Whitewater inquiry as a whole. Washington is now filled with speculation about the legal status of Bill and Hillary Clinton. Are indictments of them now more or less likely? When might they be issued? What did Ken Starr's Pepperdine surprise *mean*? It's guesswork, all of it. We'll stipulate that.

But there are intelligent guesses to be made, just the same. This one, for example: Neither Clinton will be indicted before August 1, Starr's original retirement date. We know that his office has for some time been studying an immensely long memo summarizing evidence gathered against the First Couple. The prosecutors seem to believe the evidence is insufficient for an indictment, and they seem to want additional corroboration from witnesses like former Clinton business partner Susan McDougal and former Clinton deputy attorney general Webb Hubbell. Mrs. McDougal is in jail on a contempt-of-court order for refusing to cooperate with the Whitewater investigation, and she quite plainly prefers to stay there. Hubbell, too, is in an uncooperative mood and appears prepared to risk a second prison sentence—he is now on parole from previous felony convictions—rather than provide additional evidence to the independent counsel.

So to capture these people's testimony about other potential Whitewater defendants, the Clintons among them, the counsel's office will have to seek charges and go to trial. Trials take time. Whatever mysterious pressure to keep silent Mrs. McDougal, Hubbell, and unnamed other principals already face will only intensify in the meantime. And they can only have been emboldened by last week's events. Kenneth Starr himself has been tempted to throw in the towel on Whitewater. Anyone disinclined to implicate the Clintons would of course take heart from this revelation: Why not remain obstinately mum?

Yes, there are people enraged by the prospect of Bill and Hillary Clinton slipping the legal noose like this. We are not among them; Mr. Starr has disappointed us, but that's not why. The Weekly Standard would not welcome criminal charges against either Clinton, and we have never much expected them. Such charges would paralyze the nation's public life for the duration of the Clinton presidency, a result surely to be avoided if at all possible. It's not even clear, for that matter, whether the Constitution *allows* a sitting president to be indicted in advance of congressional impeachment proceedings. There has never been a Supreme Court ruling on the subject. The closest we've come is the decision in *U.S.* v. *Nixon*, when the justices decided the president had to turn over his

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tape recordings to special prosecutor Leon Jaworski—but nothing more.

Ah, yes: parallels with Richard Nixon. The comparison enrages the Clintonites. The criminal issues involved in Whitewater are undeniably serious. Counting guilty pleas and trial judgments, Whitewater has already produced twelve criminal convictions on multiple felony counts. It has metastasized into Travelgate and Filegate and Asiagate and who knows what else to come. But Watergate was worse, any Clinton partisan would argue. And at least insofar as publicly proven White House criminal culpability is concerned, that partisan would be right.

And yet. It took but two years for Nixon's upper lip to sweat out the basic truths of Watergate. He could have destroyed his tapes. But he was too susceptible to shame, too afraid of history's requirements, for that. What of our current president and his current scandal? We are almost *five* years into Whitewater, and the closest students of the subject know a lot—enough long ago to have concluded that this White House is *essentially* dishonest in a way even Dick Nixon's never was. But we do not yet know enough to force beads of sweat onto Bill Clinton's upper lip.

Clinton never sweats. Criticize his substantive politics, and he accuses you of personalized hatred. Criticize his personal or administrative ethics and character, and he accuses you of ideological and partisan hatred. In the president's narcissistic imagination, his virtue is limitless, because there is no such thing as an objective reality that might impugn it.

And he will never freely offer us such a reality himself. No day any longer goes by in Washington without some fresh, scandal-related disclosure that directly contradicts something a senior administration official has said in the recent past.

Can anyone doubt that if Bill Clinton had Oval Office tapes, he would expect Bruce Lindsey to burn them? And that Bruce Lindsey would burn them? And that his entire tawdry crew of West Wing cronies would take the secret to their graves? Because their secret, whatever it may be, cannot be squared with the idea that Bill Clinton is perfectly good. So the secret cannot be true. Even if it is.

This is an unnatural philosophy, and an especially dangerous one in a democratic political order dependent on informed consent. We do not *need* to indict or impeach our president. But we do need to know what's wrong with him and his wife and staff—the thing or things they are so obviously desperate to hide from us. And because they *are* hiding from us, we need the full power of our laws to smoke them out: subpoenas, grand juries, indictments, trials, convictions, and the full, final accounting of an independent counsel's report as best he is able to write it.

At the beginning of last week, Kenneth Starr announced a move that would have delayed such an accounting and limited its scope and quality. Then he changed his mind. Perhaps he might still mitigate his blunder. But it was a bad week for the country, all in all.

—David Tell, for the Editors

What's the Frequency, Kenneth?

by Tod Lindberg

For a couple of years now, the investigation of Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth Starr has occupied a huge place in the Washington imagination. The investigation itself has been largely impenetrable, conducted in secrecy before grand juries in Little Rock and Washington by prosecutors who have kept their lips buttoned. Those not privy to the probe's inner workings felt free to speculate at will, ascribing to it whatever directions, goals, or motives they wished in a kind of political Rorschach test.

For many Republicans, the independent counsel's inquiry had become the repository of all the dark secrets of Clinton corruption. To be sure, it did not yield those secrets up in time for the 1996 election, when an angry electorate might have arisen to throw the lot of the Clinton crowd down the ethics sewer. But the day of reckoning was surely coming. Kenneth Starr, independent counsel, was the deus ex machina who one day would ring down the curtain on a fundamentally illegitimate and corrupt political machine.

And last week, the deus ex machina came crashing to earth with the announcement that Starr was leaving his job on August 1 for . . . Malibu, where Pepperdine University holds some very attractive real estate and where Kenneth Starr signed up to serve as the dean of two graduate schools. Conspiracy? Corruption? Cover-up? Hey, surf's up, dudes.

Then when Starr announced, at week's end, that he was postponing the singing of "California, Here I Come" until date uncertain, the surprise and confusion that had swept through Washington reached new heights. Twice in five days, all the elaborately constructed conceptions of the investigation were

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smashed to bits. In perfect keeping with virtually everything that came before them in the inquiry, Starr's announcements were utterly opaque. No one knew what the hell it all meant.

At first, Democrats were gleeful; surely this meant that the independent counsel was not going to indict the president and first lady. Republicans were angry; surely this meant that the independent counsel was not going to indict the president and first lady. To quell the speculation, Starr took the occasion of a speech he was delivering near Washington to announce that it was dangerous to draw *any* conclusions about the investigation from his decision to leave it. Naturally, this only fueled the speculation. Was he implying, then, that the president and first lady were *not* off the hook?

Sean Delonas

Meanwhile, Starr continued to be vague on when, exactly, he was formally leaving—or even if he *was*, although it sure seemed he was—and whether he would be writing a report on his investigation before his departure, or even after. The law requires an independent counsel to issue such a report at the completion of his investigation. But would the investigation *be* complete? How could it be, with former Arkansas governor Jim Guy Tucker, whom Starr convicted last year, up for a second trial in September?

What about other possible indictments? What about an interim report or reports, as the law allows? How could Starr walk away from the investigation without delivering his judgment on possible criminal wrongdoing on the part of the Clintons themselves? Didn't he owe that to the office of the presidency? Did he take his service as an independent counsel investigating the president so lightly?

Maybe so. Starr has never devoted himself full-time to his independent counsel duties. He has continued his private law practice (as the independent counsel statute allows). He continued to give speeches (nothing in the statute said he couldn't) at such venues as Liberty University, the progeny of Clinton arch-enemy Jerry Falwell. He even (again, nothing says you can't) gave money to Republican candidates for office in the past election cycle.

But then came the second announcement, the one in which he said he would stick around after all.

Starr does not exactly have a reputation for being mercurial or prone to flights of fancy. Yet his behavior had all the earmarks of self-indulgence and unseriousness, which are hardly attractive qualities in a public figure. This man is a highly successful barrister, a former appeals-court judge, a former solicitor general. Was he, all of a sudden, a toothy, four-eyed flake? What *was* the story with this guy.

There have been varying portraits of Kenneth Starr painted in the past few years. First there is the Sellout Starr. At the very right tip of the Republican Right is the group that has long regarded his investigation as a sham, and the independent counsel as a stooge of the liberal media, the establishment, etc. These are the folks who believe the investigation has acquiesced in a cover-up of the death of deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster, has failed to probe events at Arkansas's Mena airport, and has averted its gaze from a string of suspicious deaths in Clinton's home state.

Then there is the Straightshooting Starr. Starr partisans describe him as having the keenest of legal minds, the highest of ethical standards, and the steely resolve necessary to follow an investigation wherever it may lead. They are generally the ones who have been angriest at Democratic efforts to demonize him. Starr's personal political views don't matter, they have said; how he conducts his investigation does. Indeed, no one has proffered a shred of evidence that the conduct of the inquiry has been anything but professional. Democrats who have worked for him say he has been upright at all times. He even went to the length of hiring former Watergate Democratic counsel Sam Dash as his ethics adviser.

Maybe there was no more to his initial announcement than met the eye, the Straightshooting Starr supporters say. Pepperdine offered Starr a once-in-a-life-

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time opportunity to build an institution in an area where he has roots. Besides, his effort to depart the investigation stands in honorable contrast to Lawrence Walsh's refusal to shut down the Iran-contra investigation because Walsh just couldn't bear the thought of retiring to Oklahoma.

Next comes the Slippery Starr. Some on the right see him as a cautious politician—not in the partisan sense, a Republican out to avenge Richard Nixon by bringing down a Democratic president, but in the sense of carefully weighing the political implications of his every move and calculating how each step will be perceived by a world whose esteem he values above all. The Slippery Starr is ambitious and has many different constituencies. He must not alienate his conservative base, not if he wants some future public role beyond that of dean or rich lawyer. At the same time, he must not pander to his base, lest he lose his claim on the mainstream. And he must cultivate a reputation for thoughtfulness and integrity among open-minded liberals, the *Washington Post* editorial-page types who can be immensely helpful with the Left when the time comes—but who also have the power to cause serious trouble with the mere arch of an eyebrow.

The Slippery Starr is the sort of fellow who would think about indictments not merely on the merits of each particular case, but also about the impression he would create. One target might be too big; another too small; another just right. His prudence is justified, for his record is hardly perfect; in court, he won one big case and lost the other.

Finally, there is the Soft Starr, who sticks to his convictions only up to the point at which they come under serious fire, and then abandons them. The Soft Starr prefers to live to fight another day, and if that's not possible, prefers just to live another day.

The partisan Democratic view of Starr has not been particularly nuanced: Call him Sneaky Starr, ambitious stooge of big-money special interests, a ruthless tobacco-defending, school-choice-advocating conservative ideologue who would do anything and everything he could to destroy the president.

All these competing Starrs are the imaginings of his allies and his enemies; of people who have seen him at close range and people who have had a chance to judge him only secondhand; of those who owe him and those who are disinterested. Which, if any, is the real one? Again, who the hell knows?

All we do know is that for the better part of a year, Democratic loyalists have tried to make Kenneth Starr the issue. This has come in the form of what Ted Koppel has called a stream of faxes from the White House detailing Starr's alleged conflicts of interest; James Carville's media-savvy invective against him; and even the musings of the president himself to public television's Jim Lehrer on the alleged Starr vendetta. Republicans have steadfastly resisted Democratic efforts to make Starr the issue. Let the investigation take its course, they have chorused.

Was Starr trying to act nobly in the belief that, fairly or unfairly, Democratic attacks on him have poisoned the public's faith in the disinterested nature of his inquiry? Did he forget to read the independent counsel statute and assume that his deputies could finish up for him when, in fact, a new counsel would have to be named? Or was there some less highfalutin reason for his attempted exit—the sun and sand, without the Washington heat?

At week's end, was he trying to act nobly yet again by saying he would stay on because the pursuit of truth really did need him? Or did he revisit his decision because of Washington heat—this time from conservatives as well as liberals?

Either way, Starr has handed his enemies on the left a victory. He has made himself part of the issue for as long as the Whitewater inquiry lasts—which is just what James Carville wanted all along.

***Tod Lindberg is editorial page editor of the* Washington Times.**

Judging the Judges

by Matthew Rees

Think the Clinton White House and congressional Republicans never agree? Well, when it comes to federal judges, think again. In his first term, the president nominated 202 judges, and not one of them was rejected. What's more, Republicans demanded an actual roll-call vote on only four nominees—two of them for the Supreme Court. The other 198 were confirmed by unanimous consent. The Republican takeover of the Senate after the 1994 election didn't change things much; with Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah in the crucial role of Judiciary Committee chairman, the process was still geared toward confirmation.

The sweetheart treatment is about to stop. Now influential Republican senators and outside agitators are aiming to use the confirmation process to see to it

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that judicial activists do not reach the federal bench. The senators will be applying a simple litmus test: If a nominee has an expansive view of the role of judges, he will not be acceptable. Meanwhile, Tom Jipping of the Free Congress Foundation, a mainstay of conservative battles against the activist judiciary, has assembled a formidable coalition of 270 groups to pressure senators to vote against activist nominees. (The Ethics and Public Policy Center is undertaking its own, more highbrow project on the judiciary next month.)

Conservatives have been manning the ramparts against judicial activism for two decades now, but their frustration has risen to the boiling point in the past few years after several very broad, very questionable decisions. Among them: a California judge's effort to block the California Civil Rights Initiative; two appeals-court decisions in favor of physician-assisted suicide; and a Supreme Court decision that struck down an anti-gay-rights initiative approved by Colorado voters. They are redoubling their efforts now, since by the end of Clinton's second term, his appointees will constitute about half the federal judiciary.

Jipping says it's time to end the "conspiracy of silence" around judicial confirmations. He wants recorded votes on every nomination. He also wants the Senate's vetting process to focus on judicial philosophy in hopes of determining whether nominees will practice restraint on the bench. As part of the pressure campaign, the Christian Coalition has decided to include senators' adherence to Jipping's ideas as part of its ratings. Jipping has even asked senators to sign a pledge not to support "judicial activists." Three Republicans—Larry Craig, Lauch Faircloth, and Jim Inhofe—have done so.

Orrin Hatch is caught in the crossfire. Shortly after the November election, Utah's senior senator warned that "if President Clinton is permitted to use the next four years to fill our courts with liberal judicial activists, the damage to our Constitution, the rule of law, and our very right to democratic self-governance will be irreparable." That talk is like manna for conservatives, but it is belied by Hatch's friendly relations with the administration's judicial-selection team. Jack Quinn, then White House counsel, praised him last year for being "terrifically cooperative and bipartisan."

"Senator Hatch has overseen a process geared toward confirming judges, not weeding out judicial activists," Jipping complains. Hatch says that while there are few nominees he would have selected if he had been president, "Clinton has done a better job than people expected." And as a strong believer in executive privilege, Hatch is inclined to let the president have the appointments he wants; it would be "unseemly," he says, not to confirm judges on strictly ideological grounds. (The wars over Clarence Thomas and Robert Bork are the exception in modern times; judicial nominees usually sail through, whether the president is Clinton or Reagan.)

But Hatch argues he's hardly given the administration a free ride; he says he uses his good relations with the White House as a weapon that allows him a preemptive veto of some candidates ("I just call the president; he always takes my calls," says Hatch). Still, some of his Republican colleagues believe Hatch has been excessively deferential to the administration's nominees. When Senate Republicans met in January to set a 10-item agenda, Slade Gorton of Washington announced he wanted one of the items to be a commitment to hold roll-call votes on judicial nominees. Hatch objected to this encroachment on his turf; the compromise reached was the formation a task force on judicial nominations. Its true purpose, say conservatives, is to keep Hatch on his toes and stiffen his spine. The task force is expected to recommend some procedural reforms, like curtailing the role of the American Bar Association in rating nominees. Hatch supports such a move; last week, referring to the group's leftist outlook, he said, "It is time to revisit the sanctioned use of the ABA."

The wild card in the confirmation game is Trent Lott; as Senate majority leader, he decides when to bring nominations to the floor. He has made noises about standing foursquare against judicial activism, but the anti-activist forces are worried that Lott will use judicial confirmations as a bargaining chip with Democrats. Early in his tenure last year, Lott allowed 17 judges to be approved by unanimous consent before working with conservative senators to prevent other nominations from being considered on the Senate floor before the election.

The Clinton administration has already sent 20 new nominees to Hatch for confirmation, but he has not moved on them; he says when Democrats controlled the Senate they didn't start confirmation hearings until March or April.

Two weeks after the election, an associate White House counsel told the *Washington Post* that Clinton "wants people who aren't going to use the courts as a substitute legislature. The approach from the beginning was to get people who are militantly moderate." Hatch is skeptical. "We probably got more moderate judges the last four years than we're going to get in the next four," he says, and he warns that "if the White House is going to put punks up there [as nominees], I'm not going to work with them." Music to Tom Jipping's ears.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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A Return to National Greatness

A Manifesto for a Lost Creed

By David Brooks

The original Library of Congress building celebrates its centennial this year. When I mention the Jefferson Building, as it is now called, to people who have done research there, they smile at the memory of it. There's something about the place that seems to inspire affection.

In fact, the building just overpowers you with its exuberance and grandeur. The interior is unabashedly ornate and infinitely decorated. You may cross into the main reading room in a sober mood to get some serious work done, but then this great dome opens up above you. It's covered by a thousand floral medallions and a complex weave of terra cotta figures. You're surrounded by warm amber marbles, bronze sculptures, and a collection of frescoes, columns, and pediments without end.

But the Jefferson Building is more than just a giant Fabergé egg. When you get down to looking at the details, you find that the craftsmanship is actually mediocre: You can travel around Europe and find a hundred buildings with better paintings and better sculpture. Nonetheless, there is something about the energy of the building that makes it more than the sum of its parts, that makes it not so much an artistic wonder as a spiritual artifact. How did any group of builders muster so much *vitality*?

The answer is that this is an *American* building. For all its classical and Renaissance style, this 1897 building speaks to us in American. It embodies the optimism and brassy aspirations of Americans in the Gilded Age, their faith in the power of beauty to elevate, their confidence in America, their brash assertion that America was emerging as a world-historical force.

What a melancholy thing to compare today's Washington with the Washington in which there was such enthusiasm for grand American projects. The congressmen who appropriated the funds for this building wanted to make sure it was the most expensive and most glorious library on the face of the earth (some even toured Europe to check out the competition). Its architects chose the Renaissance style to invite comparison to that golden age—to suggest that America was making contributions to world culture equal to it or any other epoch. The librarian of Congress at the time, Ainsworth Spofford, gave pride of place to American heroes like Benjamin Franklin and Robert Fulton in the pantheon of historical likenesses that covers the walls. Spofford and his colleagues saw the building as a statement of American greatness—and as a way to elevate America *to* greatness.

It is worth noting that for all its aspirations, the Library of Congress was not completed at a moment of giddy prosperity. In the 1890s, Americans endured a depression during which unemployment peaked at 17 percent (it hovered above 12 percent when the library opened). A quarter of the nation's railroads had become insolvent. America was under strain on other fronts, too. During the 23 years it took to design and build the library, more people immigrated to America than in the previous 250 years combined. The nation's population almost doubled, and white Americans settled more land in these years than in the preceding three centuries. Cities grew exponentially. Slums spread. It was a period of labor unrest.

But menaced by these threats to national cohesion, Americans redoubled their devotion to American nationalism. Hit by economic blows to their confidence, they reasserted their faith in themselves. Faced by anxiety and intellectual uncertainty, they did not succumb to malaise or cynicism. Instead they counterattacked, with big projects like the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the Library of Congress.

At their worst, Gilded Age Americans reacted to anxiety with dogmatism—ponderous chest-thumping about the "superior races." But at their best, they asked big questions: How can America produce a culture it can be proud of? How will the inhabitants of some future world power look back on American

David Brooks is a senior editor of The Weekly Standard.

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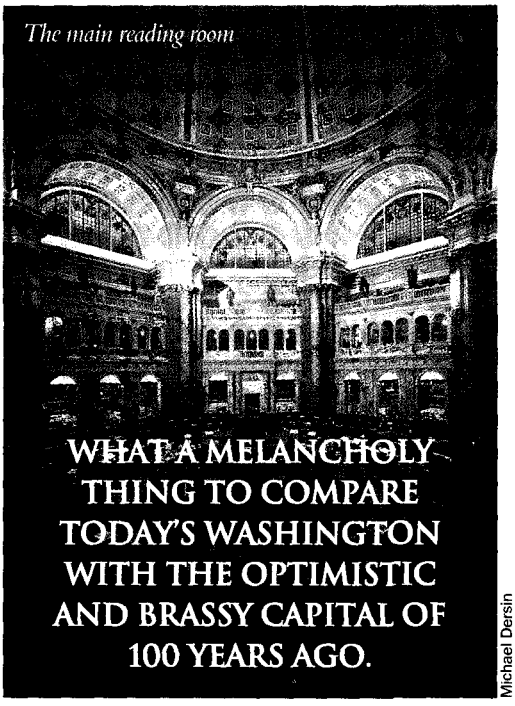
achievement during its moment of supremacy? What are the steps that a nation can take to preserve the virtues that lead to greatness in the first place?

For all that our current politicians take advantage of the library—J.C. Watts delivered the Republican response to the State of the Union there, Bill Clinton signed the telecommunications bill there—present-day leaders possess none of the library's confidence and sureness of purpose. American politicians show little evidence of the great national vigor that animates this building. They don't dare to make great plans or issue large challenges to themselves and their country. At a moment of world supremacy unlike any other, Americans are not asking big questions about their civilization, nor are they being asked anything but the sorts of things pollsters and marketers want to know. And so our politics has become degrading and boring. Political conflict appears trivial, vicious for no good reason.



Michael Dersin

The Elevation of America

The designers of the Library of Congress had a view of history that is now deeply unfashionable. They saw civilization as a chain of achievement in which each generation is the grateful inheritor of a precious legacy and is called upon as a matter of highest duty to add to and continue the great transmission. Around the Jefferson Building's central dome is a mural that epitomizes this idea. It features 12 seated, monumental figures representing the nations or epochs that, in the words of the building's original catalogue, "have contributed most to the development of present-day civilization in this country."

Under each figure is a plaque naming that culture's great achievement. Egypt is first, given credit for "Written Records." Then come Judea (religion), Greece (philosophy), Rome (administration), Islam (physics), the Middle Ages (modern languages), Italy (the fine arts), Germany (printing), Spain (discovery), England (literature), and France (emancipation). The list ends with America, which is credited with "science." The American figure in the mural, based on the young Abraham Lincoln, is dressed as an engineer, sitting in a machine shop, contemplating an electric dynamo.

The theory of history depicted in this mural balanced change and continuity. It demanded that people march forward by looking backward. It gave America impressive historical roots, a spiritual connection to the centuries at a time when Americans like Henry James felt their civilization was "thin." And it assigned a specific historic role to America as the latest successor to Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. In the procession of civilization, certain nations rise up to make extraordinary contributions. Their golden ages, it was believed, are to be revered and studied. The designers of the Library of Congress, like so many of their countrymen, thought America was on the verge of its own golden age. At the dawn of the 20th century, America was to take its turn at global supremacy. It was America's task to take the grandeur of past civilizations, modernize it, and democratize it. This common destiny would unify diverse Americans and give them a great national purpose.

The designers must have felt in their bones what Tocqueville observed: Democracy has a tendency to slide into nihilistic mediocrity if its citizens are not inspired by some larger national goal. If they think of nothing but their narrow self-interest, of their commercial activities, they lose a sense of grand aspiration and noble purpose. "What frightens me most," Tocqueville writes, "is the danger that, amid all the constant trivial preoccupations of private life, ambition may lose both its force and its greatness, that human passions may grow gentler and at the same time baser, with the result that the progress of the body social may become daily quieter and less aspiring."

The whole purpose of the library's grand interiors—and those of the Chicago Columbian Exposition, four years before the library was dedicated—was to lift Americans above the petty concerns of bourgeois life and put them in touch with aristocratic virtues and transcendent truth. The aim was not to renounce elitism, magnificence, and the aristocratic virtues, but to allow every citizen the chance to become an aristocrat

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through work, study, and merit. The building's artists and designers had enormous faith in human willpower, in its ability to master the passions and enable the individual to overcome social obstacles. For them, heroic individualism complemented heroic nationalism. They built this elaborate edifice to raise the stakes, to make life in America a more demanding and a more heroic enterprise.

So America was to strive upward. But toward what? Toward more wealth? Greater scientific achievement? Bigger buildings? No, these were just steps along the way. America's mission was to advance civilization itself. Americans and Britons of the late 19th century believed that, transcending human affairs, there is a universal order created by God. Man's duty is to strive toward that order, which precedes and controls politics, morals, history, economics, and art. A phrase from Tennyson, selected by Harvard president Charles W. Eliot and inscribed in the library, captures the message: "One God, one law, one element and one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

The library's artists broke that cosmic order down into its constituent parts. There are murals depicting each of the virtues, each of the occupations, each of the arts and sciences, each of the races. And the murals celebrate the great men and women—artists and scientists and thinkers—who were able to rise up and glimpse this universal order.

The library represents a coherent system of belief: A divine order created by God. A view of history in which man makes long progress toward that order. A series of great nations which contribute to that progress. And for Americans, a remarkable opportunity to join the great chain and participate in a heroic enterprise.

This form of American nationalism served as a foundation for the political ideas of people like Theodore Roosevelt, who believed in limited but energetic government, full-bore Americanism, active foreign policy, big national projects (such as the Panama Canal and the national parks), and efforts to smash cozy arrangements (like the trusts) that retarded dynamic meritocracy.

But now, on the verge of the 21st century, Americans have discarded their pursuit of national greatness in just about every particular.

Post-Greatness America

Our culture no longer speaks of a unified and coherent order. The postmodernist view emphasizes fragmentation and disorder. Philosophers talk about contingency and irony and the ever-shifting meanings of words. Since Hemingway, our intellectuals have perceived hypocrisy, not transcendence, when words like "honor" and "glory" are used.

Our official culture disdains the idea that history is a story of progress unfolding. We think it naive. Maybe it was World War I that made the idea unpopular, or the Holocaust, or a thousand other events in our pessimism-inducing century.

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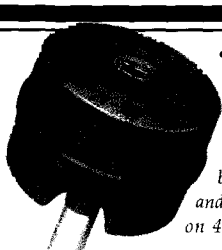

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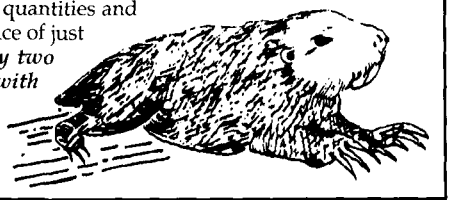

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We no longer look at history as a succession of golden ages. Instead, history is something of a chaos; cultures bubble about in a relativistic stew. Historians do not measure cultures by their contribution to one central world civilization.

And, save in the speeches of politicians who usually have no clue what they are talking about, America is assigned no special role as the vanguard of civilization. Nobody talks of America as a New Jerusalem; that would be ethnocentric. Nor do we engage in grandiose hero-worship; indeed, we are more adept at debunking than idolizing. We are suspicious of hierarchies, of the idea that one art form is higher than another, that one way of living is superior to another. On the contrary, as Denis de Rougemont says, "It is whatever is lower that we take to be more real."

America is a more dominant power in the world than Americans a century ago could ever have imagined. Yet we have almost none of the sense of global purpose that Americans had when they only dreamed of enjoying the stature we possess today. Domestically, we have a president and a Congress whose major common purpose is . . . balancing the budget.

For much of this century, liberals possessed high aspirations and a spirit of historical purpose. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, the New Deal, John F. Kennedy's New Frontier—these were efforts to aim high, to accomplish some grand national endeavor. Liberals tried to use American preeminence as a way to shape the world, fight communism, put a man on the moon. But then came the 1970s, and suddenly liberalism became a creed emphasizing limits. Small became beautiful. A radical egalitarianism transformed liberalism, destroying hierarchies and discrediting elitist aspirations. An easygoing nihilism swept through academia, carrying away any sense of a transcendent order. The civil-rights era turned into the affirmative-action era, and what had been a great national crusade for justice devolved into a series of petty squabbles over spoils.

Worse, under the influence of the New Left, the personal became political. Private concerns came to eclipse the larger public realm. At a time when a teenager's haircut was a political statement to be adjudicated by the Supreme Court, all the issues of the private realm—smoking, methods of raising children, sexual preferences—began to overshadow the traditional subjects of the public realm: subjects like order, justice, and the distribution of wealth. Americans have almost forgotten what the public realm *is* and how it differs from the sum of private concerns.

Thus has our America neglected the sphere of issues that transcends the desires of a single generation. As a nation, we have realized Tocqueville's worst fears; we have replaced high public aspiration with the narrower concerns of private life. These days in politics it is more important to be seen possessing the private virtues—compassion and caring—than it is to be seen possessing the public virtues like courage and integrity.

Consider Bill Clinton. He longs to be a great leader, but cultural liberalism has robbed him of any way to realize his dream. The national-greatness ideal of the 19th century was based first on the vigorous virtues, but cultural liberalism mistakes virility for sexism and the oppression of women.

The national-greatness ideal was also based on *reticence*, the idea that people should present a more austere and noble face to the world and reserve their less austere side for private life. Publicly, Theodore Roosevelt was unforgiving of his brother Elliott's adultery; privately, he tried to help Elliott through his ensuing despair. But cultural liberalism has smashed reticence, mistaking it for hypocrisy. Finally, the national-greatness ideal was based on iron discipline over the passions. But cultural liberalism mistook self-control for unhealthy repression.

And so, at the end of liberalism, we find Bill Clinton. Longing to personify greatness but too easy on himself, trained to discard the qualities that comprise it, he is the opposite of vigorous, the opposite of reticent, the opposite of self-disciplined.

Post-National America

But it is primarily the fault of conservatives that America has lost a sense of national mission and national greatness. After all, this is a conservative era, and one shouldn't expect the Democrats to come up with the energy that animates a conservative era. But since Ronald Reagan returned to California, conservatism has shrunk.

The fact is, if liberals choke on the "greatness" part of national greatness, conservatives choke on the "national" part. Most conservatives have come to confuse "national" with "federal." When they hear of a national effort, they think "big government program."

Conservatives have taken two sensible ideas and ballooned them to the point of elephantiasis. The first is anti-statism. They took a truth—that government often causes suffering when it interferes in the free market—and stretched it into a blanket hostility to government. Instead of arguing that government should be limited but energetic, slender but strong, they have often argued that government is itself evil.

In so doing, conservatives have introduced their

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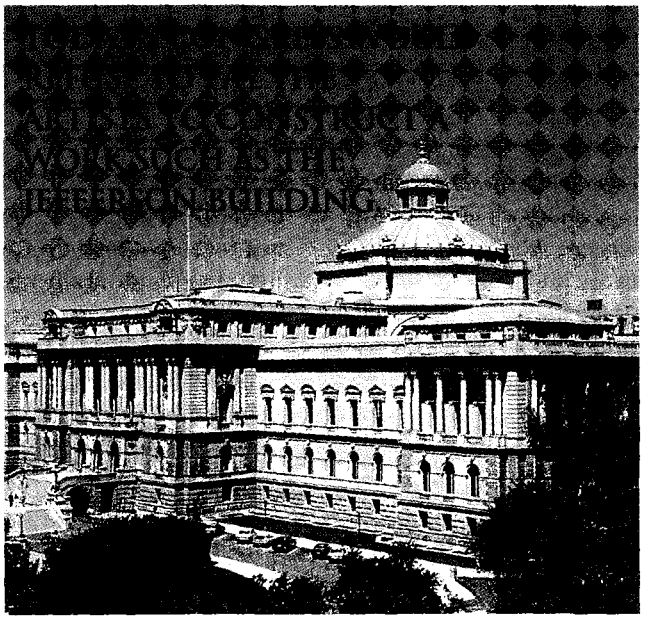
own version of the liberal sin by allowing the private to eclipse the public. Many conservatives argue simply that the private realm is good and the public realm is bad, that private endeavor is moral and public endeavor is corrupt. They saw that many of the public policies that emerged during the 60 years of liberal dominance had nightmarish consequences. Now many can't conceive of a public realm that would affirm any of the virtues they hold dear. Instead, they have concluded that the public policy issuing from the public realm is the problem. They want to free the private sector from big government, which is a worthy goal, but you can't lead a great nation if you don't have an affirmative view of the public realm.

Today's congressional conservatives couldn't conceivably sponsor a daring statement of American greatness like the Jefferson Building. They would refuse to pay for the artists to construct such a work on the grounds that the federal government should have no role in such cultural action. They would balk at anything public that was so conspicuously lavish. They don't have the self-confidence to put forth a cultural vision that is so clear and striking. Few conservatives could even conceive of a federal arts program that would reflect glory on America.



The other idea that conservatives have stretched to elephantiasis is populism. They have taken a healthy distrust of elites and turned it into a blanket hostility to establishments. The men who built the Jefferson Building hoped every person would have the chance to work his way into the elite, into a natural aristocracy. But many of today's conservatives use the language of populist resentment more than of meritocratic aspiration. They use phrases like "inside the Beltway" to condemn those who have risen to high positions in public life. They support term limits on the grounds that experience in government is corrupting, rather than a form of public service.

They have become besotted with localism, local communities, and the devolution of power to the localities. By contrast, those who preached national greatness were not believers in the superior virtue of the simple folk, as today's populists are. They believed in effort, cultivation, and mastery. They believed in cities and urbanity. They believed in capitals, in monuments, in grandeur.

In their passion for devolution, conservatives have neglected the need for a strong national government. Certain government services may be delivered more efficiently from Albany, Harrisburg, or Sacramento, but ultimately, American purpose can find its voice only in Washington.

The best conservative thought knows that without a sense of national community, we balkanize. We become acutely aware of the different needs of our national subcultures: black, white, Hispanic, gay, feminist. But we are not reminded of any common mission that unites us. It becomes easier for demagogues to pit us against one another because there are no countervailing leaders offering common national tasks. We begin to turn on outsiders and immigrants.

Without vigorous national vision, we are plagued by anxiety and disquiet. The great questions of the age are, Why do we feel so bad when we are doing so well materially? And why do we feel the nation is doing so badly if we ourselves are doing so well? The common answer is that we don't have a clear sense of what America is for, what we, as a nation, should achieve with all our wealth. As our public realm collapses into the private, our public morality becomes confused with matters of public health, from smoking to the distribution of free needles. We try to curb bad behavior by scolding and political correctness, but we have no way to inspire good behavior by holding up lofty goals.

Restoring American Greatness

Can we create a 21st-century version of the national-greatness ideal and so recapture the confidence manifest in the Library of Congress? What is needed is a process of pruning—cutting government's forays

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into private life while strengthening its public role. This is not the anti-statism of recent conservative vintage, nor is it a proposal to reinvent government along neoliberal lines. It's a more fundamental change that requires a transformation in the way we think about the federal government's role.

Currently, American political philosophy has divided itself into the opposing principles of "order" and "freedom." Now, when liberals stand for one, conservatives stand for the other. Liberals want economic order; conservatives want economic freedom. Conservatives want social order; liberals want social freedom.

This has forced the national government to engage in a pervasive balancing act. It is forever invading the private sphere in an effort to strengthen community here, or strengthen individual freedoms there. Washington becomes the battleground on which the fine distinctions between individual rights and community prerogatives are fought out. The national-greatness ideal assigns the federal government another role: It should accomplish national missions. And in so doing, it will set the national tone.

The national mission can be carried out only by individuals and families—not by collectives, as in socialism and communism. Instead, individual ambition and willpower are channeled into the cause of national greatness. And by making the nation great, individuals are able to join their narrow concerns to a larger national project.

Historically, national missions have included settling the West, building the highway system, creating the post-war science faculties, exploring space, waging the Cold War, and disseminating American culture throughout the world.

The most successful missions have set physical goals, rather than abstract ones: America in 1897 constructed the world's finest library. The library has had an important impact on culture, but its impact is the byproduct of a physical project. Sometimes the federal government has funded these efforts. Sometimes it has merely identified the new national cause. Sometimes it has eliminated barriers to ambition.

It almost doesn't matter what great task government sets for itself, as long as it does some tangible thing with energy and effectiveness. The first task of government is to convey a spirit of confidence and vigor that can then spill across the life of the nation. Stagnant government drains national morale. A government that fails to offer any vision merely feeds public cynicism and disenchantment.

But energetic government is good for its own sake. It raises the sights of the individual. It strengthens common bonds. It boosts national pride. It continues the great national project. It allows each generation to join the work of their parents. The quest for national greatness defines the word "American" and makes it new for every generation. ♦

The Conservative Case for Amending the Constitution

By Robert H. Bork

One of the minor irritations of being conservative is listening to liberals, and sometimes even fellow conservatives, lecture on what it means to be a "true" conservative. The true conservative, it sometimes appears, may oppose fresh liberal depredations but must docilely preserve liberal victories of the past. This refrain becomes deafening when the question of reining in a runaway judiciary arises. There is said to be a contradiction between conservatism properly understood (especially by liberals) and amending the Constitution to rectify the judiciary's more blatant distortions. It is difficult to see why that should be so.

Conservatives agree that our courts are producing a major constitutional crisis as federal and state judges

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increasingly, and with bland, indeed smug, indifference to the proper limits of the judicial role, usurp the powers that the Constitution places in the people and their elected representatives. Judges are transforming our national culture against the wishes of the electorate and without the slightest legal warrant. As Justice Scalia put it in dissent, the Supreme Court is writing a Constitution for a country he does not recognize. Why must the body politic tamely accept the amendments the court makes but offer none of its own?

Only recently, the court has created special rights for homosexuals, protected obscenity on cable television, and, in the grip of radical feminism, ruled, contrary to a century-old understanding, that state-run all-male military colleges violate the Constitution. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of Hawaii is about to rule that homosexual marriages must be permitted. Lower federal courts have created a right to physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Courts have all but banished religion and religious symbolism from our public life, created a wholly spurious right to abortion, made discipline difficult to impossible in public schools, required discrimination by race in public schools, ordered violent felons back on the streets because of what judges perceive as overcrowding in prisons, taken over the hiring and promotion policies of police and fire departments, required drastic changes in the composition of state legislatures, and transformed the First Amendment from a protector of ideas to a protector of self-gratification, so that obscenity and pornography are rife in our culture. Our courts will continue along these lines indefinitely unless we devise a counter.

Intellectual criticism is unavailing: Activist judges are moved by their policy preferences, not by logical argument. Nor is a change in personnel a promising course. New appointments to the court by presidents attempting to change its direction have not overturned left-liberal decisions of the past or even appreciably slowed the flow of new ones. The idea of refusing to confirm nominees who would be activists is a nonstarter. Few nominees have any track record, and none admit to being activist. The Senate has rarely knowingly confirmed activists; we usually discover what we've bought after the candidate is on the bench. The most activist left-wing justice in our history, William Brennan, was not suspected of being that when confirmed. Harry Blackmun went on the court as a conservative, voted that way for a time, and then migrated to the far left.

The frequently suggested tack of making exceptions to the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, as Article III, Section 2, of the Constitution permits, would, even if held constitutional, which is not a certainty, merely lodge federal constitutional questions irremovably in state courts. Their behavior, as we have repeatedly seen, is unlikely to be any better. Some years ago, federal judges met in Williamsburg, Virginia, at the same time as a conference of state supreme court chief justices. There was much talk at the time of taking abortion cases away from the federal courts. The state chief justices unanimously adopted a resolution that, in that event, the state courts would follow federal precedent.

The problem defies easy solution because it is embedded in the Constitution itself, which means that any solution will have to be structural. The Framers carefully provided checks by the executive on the legislature and by the legislature on the executive, but they provided none whatever upon the federal judiciary. The reason was not that they wanted federal courts to be uncheckable policymaking bodies but rather that those who wrote and ratified the Constitution thought of the judiciary as a branch of government that would merely carry out the will of others. Its relative insignificance was so taken for granted that in the Philadelphia convention and in the ratifying debates almost no attention was paid to the court system that was being established. Hamilton, for example, wrote in *The Federalist* that the powers of the judiciary were as nothing compared with those of the executive and legislative branches. The Founders had no idea what courts claiming the power of judicial review could become, and so they left us helpless before judges who place themselves above democratic government.

Once the power of judicial review was claimed, the result was inevitable: a slow but inexorable expansion of rule by judges. Jefferson warned us of this, as did Lincoln. Learned Hand, probably the greatest of our court of appeals judges, said the system is fatuous that gives such powers to men it insists shall be independent of popular control. The power of judges would be legitimate in a democratic polity, he argued, only if we chose restrained judges or provided a democratic check upon the courts. We have never succeeded in finding a majority of restrained judges; what is left is fashioning a democratic check, and that will require a constitutional amendment.

The prestige of the judiciary has become so great, however, that the commentators almost uniformly tell us it would be dangerously rash to amend the Constitution to preserve what the courts are destroying. Thus, columnist Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. opposed amend-

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ments to allow school prayer and ban flag-burning as dangerous tampering with the First Amendment, "the foundation stone of both church-state separation and free speech." "For two centuries," Yoder wrote, "the meaning of the First Amendment has been exclusively decided by jurists protected by life tenure from raw political passions. . . . Tinkering with the First Amendment isn't conservatism, whatever values are invoked in its defense. It is pseudo-conservatism—in the pure state."

He might reflect that, at present, nothing protects us from the judges' raw political passions.

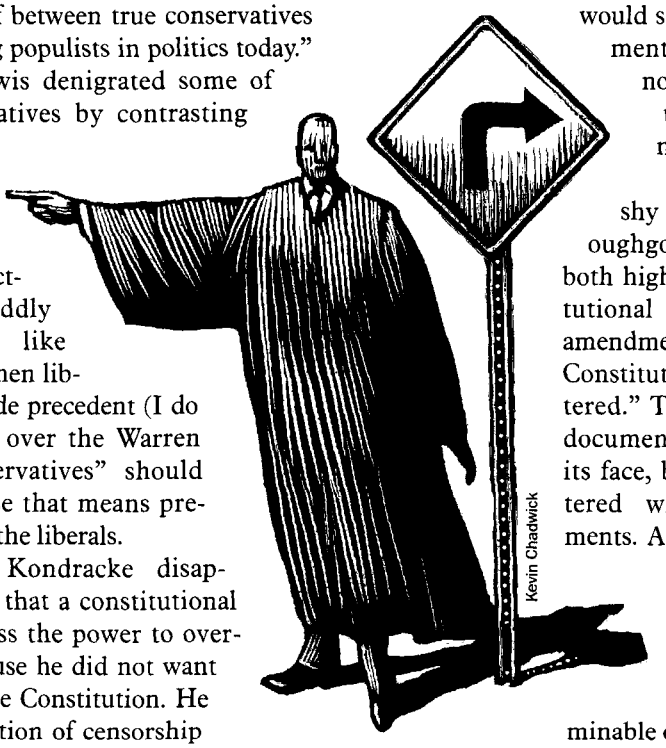
Columnist David Broder wrote that the court "stopp[ed] the term-limits movement in its tracks and expos[ed] the glaring gulf between true conservatives and the radical-right-wing populists in politics today." Columnist Anthony Lewis denigrated some of today's judicial conservatives by contrasting them with John Marshall Harlan who, he claimed, "was a conservative in the true sense, a judge who respected precedent. . . ." Oddly enough, commentators like Lewis do not complain when liberal activist judges override precedent (I do not recall his agonizing over the Warren court), but "true conservatives" should respect precedent because that means preserving the handiwork of the liberals.

Columnist Morton Kondracke disapproved of my suggestion that a constitutional amendment give Congress the power to override court decisions because he did not want the legislature revising the Constitution. He remarked that my suggestion of censorship of obscene materials disqualified me for the court.

These comments assume, quite mistakenly, that tampering with court decisions is tampering with the Constitution itself. It is simply not the case that the Constitution *is* what the courts have made of it in the last several decades. Kondracke illustrates the point. He evidently thinks that censorship of obscene materials has always been outlawed by the First Amendment. In fact, his test for appointment to the court would have disqualified most of the justices in our history.

Censorship was regarded as entirely compatible with the First Amendment up until recent years. In 1942, a unanimous Supreme Court stated that there was no constitutional problem with banning the lewd, the obscene, and the profane. In the early prosecutions for the distribution of pornography, the pornographers did not even raise the First Amendment because nobody thought it was relevant. In those days, the courts were true to the historical meaning of the amendment as a protection of the articulation and circulation of ideas. That changed decisively when the court (in a 1971 opinion by that "true conservative" respecter of precedent, John Marshall Harlan) held, contrary to the previous understanding, that a young man wearing in a courthouse a jacket that had an obscenity on the back could not be prosecuted because one man's obscenity is another man's lyric.

If these commentators would trouble to compare the present state of the law with the historic understanding of the Constitution, they would see that most of the amendments they oppose would alter not the Constitution but only the hash the courts have made of it.


Kevin Chadwick

Some conservatives also shy at the thought of any thoroughgoing reform. I know two, both highly sophisticated in constitutional matters, who oppose amendments on the ground that the Constitution ought not to be "cluttered." The Constitution may be a document of elegant simplicity on its face, but it is now thickly cluttered with judge-made amendments. At least a democratic clutter would be out in the open for people to vote on rather than hidden in the Supreme Court's little-read and often interminable opinions.

Even Midge Decter has written that "perhaps someone will find a decent and nondisruptive way" to return the court to its intended role. She speculates that I might know how to do that, but says she tends to doubt it because I seem "too outraged by the Court's misbehavior and too unhappy with what [I] see as the public's complaisance to be able to come up with a truly conservative [those words again] prescription."

One begins to see the point in Friedrich Hayek's denial that he was a conservative. He said that the decisive objection to any "true conservatism" is that "by its very nature it cannot offer an alternative to the direction in which we are moving. . . . It has, for this reason, invariably been the fate of conservatism to be dragged along a path not of its choosing. The tug of

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war between conservatives and progressives can only affect the speed, not the direction, of contemporary developments."

Liberalism is an aggressive force. It is not clear why the utterly disruptive behavior of left-liberal courts over a period of five or six decades must be opposed only nondisruptively, whatever that may mean. Stronger measures will be required. If, as some suggest, a constitutional amendment doing away with judicial review altogether were adopted, we would then govern ourselves in the same fashion that the United Kingdom and continental democracies have done successfully for centuries. That would surely be better than our present situation, unless you think, as many liberals do, that the people of the United States are irredeemably fascist at heart.

I have suggested a constitutional amendment making any court decision, state or federal, past or present, subject to legislative revision by majority vote. In the case of state court decisions, the revision could be by the state legislature; Congress would be able to revise federal court decisions.

There is nothing the least bit ironic or inconsistent about conservatives' wishing to amend the Constitution. The "true conservative," if we must use that term, wishes to restore, so far as possible, the intended processes of our government and the original meaning of our Constitution. Conservatives should not lead revolutions, but they contribute very little if, when things have gone badly wrong, they do not attempt counterrevolutions.

The prospects for reform are not healthy. Too few people understand the problem or, if they do, have the heart to face the inevitable charges that what they propose is eliminating the independence of the judiciary and, with it, our freedoms. If one were to bet, the odds are that matters will continue as they are as far as the eye can see. The 105th Congress could perform a signal public service by holding hearings to explore the problem and possible solutions. But even that may be too much to expect in today's climate. Sooner or later, however, the political branches, which are the custodians of democracy, are going to have to deal in some fashion with an increasingly authoritarian judiciary. ♦

BIG GOVERNMENT BY STEALTH

With Cat-like Tread, Bill Clinton Is Bringing It Back

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Conservatives have a tendency to delude themselves. First they decided that the Republican victories in 1994 proved that Bill Clinton had become irrelevant. Irrelevant he wasn't; he suckered the Republicans into shutting down the government and then whipped them soundly in 1996. No matter, say the conservatives. We may have lost the battle for the presidency, but we have won the war for the hearts and minds of America, reelecting a Republican House and an even more conservative Senate. Besides, the president says that the age of big government is over and that the budget must be balanced by 2002. Break out the champagne at think tanks all over Washington.

Irwin M. Stelzer is director of regulatory policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Not so fast. We are quite possibly witnessing a revival of liberal, activist government, rather than a consolidation of the conservative intellectual triumphs of the past 20 years. "Is it possible," asks *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr., "that conservatives, after a great run, are now the folks with the tired ideas, and liberals, of all people, the possessors of intellectual energy?" Guess what his answer is.

And he may be right. Consider the wide press coverage that the Economic Policy Institute managed to get for *The State of Working America, 1996-97*, a tome by Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, and John Schmitt. The economy may be growing, the trio writes, but "overall growth does not . . . lead to improved economic well-being for typical families." Among other things, the nation suffers from "greater

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income inequality and a tighter squeeze on the middle class . . . deteriorating wages . . . jobs have become less secure . . . only corporate profits and CEO pay are doing better than in the past."

A grim picture, and one crying out for an activist, redistributionist government to ride to the rescue. And why shouldn't it? After all, the trio says, "[c]ompared to other advanced industrialized countries, the overall U.S. tax burden is light and has increased little in the last 30 years." Never mind that these other advanced industrialized countries are suffering from double-digit and rising unemployment (France, Germany, Spain) or have economies on the verge of collapse (Japan). If only America would emulate the redistributionist policies of its European and Asian allies, all would be well.

If this could be dismissed as harmless outpourings by the usual suspects, conservatives could remain calm—indeed, even slightly smug. But the EPI study is really an expanded version of the thinking of Robert Reich, the Clinton soulmate and former labor secretary who found the president such a demanding employer that continuing in his service would require neglecting the Reich family (family-leave bill or no). More important, the notion that there are still plenty of things that need fixing in America, and that government should be the fixer, was almost immediately reflected in the president's post-election program.

Conservatives have delighted in pointing out that Clinton dressed in their clothing immediately before and during the 1996 campaign. But they are less eager to admit that that was then and this is now, that since securing his second term the president has rediscovered the virtues of activist government, new taxes, and a budget doomed to perpetual imbalance. This is one Clinton flip-flop that conservatives prefer to ignore, for to acknowledge it would be to admit that liberalism redux is abroad in the land.

The president's budget includes almost as many tax increases as tax cuts. It increases spending on domestic programs. It creates a new middle-class entitlement program—a tax credit to offset the cost of college tuition for middle-class kids—that is certain to grow at least as rapidly as have its predecessors. And, unless you think Al Gore's first act as president in 2001 will be to roll back increases in environmental spending and other such programs, it mandates budget deficits as far ahead as even a young conservative's eye can see. It even relies on price controls to reduce health-care costs.

The Republicans, of course, may succeed in eliminating some of these throwbacks to the good old days of tax-and-spend. But they remain shell-shocked by the Democratic attacks on them as the party willing to cast sick old people out into the snow, and they seem unwilling to risk a real showdown with the president lest they be accused of fomenting discord in newly bipartisan Washington.

Unfortunately for conservatives, even if they head the president off at the fiscal pass, they will lose the fight to make government smaller and less intrusive. For Clinton has learned two tricks with which they cannot seem to cope: corporate looting and regulation by stealth.

Corporate looting is a variant on the corporate-responsibility theme so important to flat-broke liberal politicians. It goes something like this: Businesses, particularly large corporations, have a responsibility not only to shareholders but to "stakeholders." Workers and consumers, the argument continues, have a stake in the performance and conduct of the companies for which they work and from which they buy, and corporations have a responsibility to these stakeholders. So corporations should give time off to new mothers and new fathers, to parents who want to visit their children's schools or take their pets to the vet. And they should provide their workers with health care that includes provisions for minimum hospital stays and wide coverage.

Of course, responsible companies will do all this voluntarily—and be rewarded with a photo-op with the president (a night in the Lincoln Bedroom costs slightly more). But what to do about those companies—and there are always more than a few of them—that fail to see the light? Their compliance with the new "stakeholder" theory will have to be compulsory, through legislation that mandates the desired behavior.

No one denies that this will cost a lot of money. But the cost will be borne by the companies; the programs require no new taxes and no increase in the budget deficit. True, corporations will have to raise prices or cut back on investment. But who will notice?

Such mandates are the only free lunches left to politicians. And a Republican Congress that proved itself unwilling to oppose an increase in the minimum wage is already showing signs that its members will submissively watch the president devour these lunches until they decide they might like a bite or two themselves.

The second weapon in the hands of those politicians not entirely reconciled to shrinking government is *regulation by stealth*. Gone are the days when massive new regulations could be imposed on busi-

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ness. But the president has proved himself a master at sneaking new regulations through the legislative and rule-making processes with a minimum of fanfare.

For example, within a week of his reelection, Clinton ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to tighten regulations governing air quality—an action that will impose added costs estimated at $16 billion annually by industry spokesmen. He also directed the Corps of Engineers to tighten regulations concerning the use of so-called "wetlands" (often a damp bit of ground on which some migrating bird not spotted for years might some day decide to rest en route to a southern vacation after a pleasant autumn up north).

Not to be outdone, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has resumed its campaign to set ergonomic standards intended to reduce repetitive stress illnesses; the trucking industry estimates that compliance would cost it $6.5 billion per year. OSHA is also proposing to order all-night convenience stores and restaurants to employ more than one clerk on the evening shift, apparently on the theory that criminals carry only single-shot weapons and will therefore refrain from nighttime robberies when faced by two clerks (who have probably been disarmed by Clinton's gun-control laws).

The cost of these regulations may or may not be justified by the benefits they will achieve; I haven't analyzed them carefully enough to know. But they do show that the age of balanced budgets and no-new-taxes need not also be the age of fewer government intrusions into business affairs.

One of the interesting things about this covert expansion of the state is the attitude of the business community—or, more precisely, a part of the business community. Large corporations, run by corpocrats, are quite willing to acquiesce in these impositions, although at times only after emitting a squeal or two. Many of them already provide the benefits the government wants to make universal, having conceded them in collective-bargaining agreements. Indeed, "acquiesce" is perhaps too weak a word: Many large companies *welcome* these rules because they impose costly burdens on smaller, less well-heeled competitors.

Besides, acceptance of the new rules gives a CEO an opportunity to be photographed with an approving president fulsome in his praise for the public-spirited and humane way in which the CEO is willing to spend his shareholders' money. Thus, many of our big corporations supported Mrs. Clinton's health-care bill, and many have learned how to use environmental regulations to their advantage.

So there you have it. The day of big government—but big government by stealth—has returned. As Stephen Sondheim wrote of the arrival of heroes, there won't be trumpets. When costs soar and regulations multiply, there will instead be bland, small-type inserts in the Federal Register, and obscure entries in an impenetrable budget document. ♦

A Defense Agenda for William Cohen

By Eliot A. Cohen & A.J. Bacevich

The appointment of former senator William S. Cohen as secretary of defense has come at a crucial moment for the American military, which confronts perplexing dilemmas only six years after winning the most lopsided battlefield victory in history. Since Desert Storm and the end of the Cold War, American soldiers have been engaged in frenetic activity all over the world. They have Provided Comfort, Restored Hope, Upheld Democracy, Denied Flight, and employed Deliberate Force, to recall only a few of the high points. But even as the range of military activities has increased drastically, the number of

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people in the American military has contracted severely from its Cold War level of 2.1 million to 1.4 million today.

And although the overall defense budget remains just slightly below $250 billion per year, the Pentagon is coming up short in its efforts to scrape together resources for the ongoing modernization of American weaponry necessary to guarantee this country a continuing qualitative edge. Even though John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says that the Pentagon should be investing $60 billion per year on new equipment, actual spending is less than $40 billion—and many experts think Shalikashvili's own $60 billion estimate is too conservative.

Matters as important as these are usually the province of the president, charged with ultimate responsibility for the defense of the United States. But of all the areas in the federal government, the Pentagon seems the one that makes Bill Clinton the most uncomfortable. Given his personal history, the president is fearful of accusations that he may be short-changing defense. And so he has shied away from the unpleasant decisions needed to resolve the mismatch between the amount of money the military needs to maintain its qualitative advantage and the amount it receives from federal coffers.

THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES LYING AHEAD FOR THE PENTAGON DERIVE FROM A DEFICIT NOT OF DOLLARS BUT OF STATESMANSHIP.

The administration has been content to paper over the problem by promising a fix somewhere on the far side of the bridge to the 21st century. Given the imperative of thinking about American security well into the future, that century has effectively arrived at the Pentagon.

The pressure to find money that will balance the federal budget by 2002 is intensifying. And the impulse to look to the defense budget as a source of savings is a bipartisan one: Newt Gingrich told the 105th Congress that he wanted to cut the Pentagon down into a triangle. But if brokering a new budget deal becomes the chief objective of Cohen's tenure as secretary of defense, if that task consumes his energies and political capital, he will serve as an administrator rather than an agent of change, a dealmaker rather than a leader.

No defense secretary can remove himself from the battle of the budget. But for a defense secretary aspiring to assure American military dominance well into the 21st century, the principal challenges lurking ahead derive from a deficit not of dollars but of statesmanship. Two broad areas require bold and creative leadership in the Pentagon and should head Cohen's agenda as defense secretary.

The first area is strategy. The uncomfortable fact is that the United States has become a global hegemon, its soldiers members of a constabulary enforcing a Pax Americana. It may be awkward or disconcerting to admit as much to ourselves, let alone to others, but to pretend otherwise will serve in the long run only to confuse citizens and soldiers alike. As a result, the nation is sorely in need of a new public discourse appropriate to the grand strategic enterprise to which the United States has tacitly committed itself. That enterprise goes beyond fostering American values and defending vital interests. When U.S. forces steam into the Taiwan straits, hurl missiles at Iraq, or occupy Bosnia, they are neither "enlarging democracy" nor protecting interests that conform to traditional notions of being "vital." Rather, the purpose of such missions is to maintain order and uphold acceptable standards of international behavior.

Terms like "containment," "extended deterrence," and "flexible response" that once framed the debate over U.S. military strategy have now outlived their usefulness. Devising replacements that will both encompass and legitimize the protracted, costly, frequently thankless project of serving as global hegemon has become imperative.

The vague form of democratic messianism the Clinton administration preferred in its first four years—"enlargement" was its ungainly term of choice—will not suffice. American forces will often have to operate in ambiguous circumstances in which the good guys and bad guys may differ only marginally, and in which neither friend nor foe will have read the *Federalist Papers*. Without a lexicon that enables Americans to acknowledge that grand strategic project, meaningful debate becomes impossible. Without debate, there can be no genuine strategic consensus. Without consensus, policies will lack coherence and consistency.

Unfortunately, in matters related to strategy, the Clinton administration has thus far shown a singular lack of imagination. This was made manifest four years ago by the Bottom-Up Review, a narrow and unaffordable strategy devised at the behest of the late Les Aspin, Clinton's first secretary of defense. The

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Bottom-Up Review directs Pentagon planners to view the world in terms of "major regional contingencies"—large conventional wars with the likes of North Korea and Iraq. As long as the Bottom-Up Review remains nominally in place, debate within the Pentagon confines itself to questions such as whether the United States should be prepared to fight one-and-a-half or two Desert Storm conflicts simultaneously.

The very idea of "major regional contingencies" is itself an arbitrary construct of limited relevance to the actual geopolitical landscape. It is as if every future war the United States might find itself involved in will adhere to the singular set of circumstances that led to the Persian Gulf War.

War against "rogue states" like Iraq is only one of several overlapping challenges facing the United States. It is by no means the most dangerous and may well be the least likely. No less demanding, but currently treated as an afterthought, is the issue of homeland defense. It involves protecting the continental United States from threats that range from terror to nuclear attack. So, too, with the challenge of sustaining the Pax Americana as a whole, a task that may include more Haitis and more Bosnias. Finally, there is the challenge of assuring conventional American superiority over emerging powers or coalitions in the more distant future.

Each of these strategic challenges calls for a distinct response. They also compete with one another. For example, the resources spent to occupy Bosnia become unavailable for spending on homeland defense. And assuring American superiority over new military powers requires capabilities dissimilar to those needed to protect the United States from terrorism. The Bottom-Up Review ignores this competition in favor of a simplified geopolitics derived from Desert Storm.

Cohen should resist the temptation offered him by the Bottom-Up Review to strip the strategic future of its complexity. Rather, he should expose, encourage, and preside over the collision of contending priorities. To do so, however, he must create some mechanism that forces Pentagon planners to enunciate the requirements of these strategic challenges and make the necessary tradeoffs between them. Absent such a mechanism, the United States opens itself to strategic surprise.

In fact, a ready-made device for a serious reexamination of strategy already exists. It is called the Quadrennial Defense Review, mandated by Congress in the hope of shaking up post-Cold War defense thinking. Although current expectations are that it will only prove an exercise in ratifying the status quo set by the Bottom-Up Review in 1993, it still represents an opportunity for Cohen to chart a new course at the Pentagon.

The second broad area requiring Cohen's strong leadership is civil-military relations. At times openly bitter during the first Clinton administration, civil-military relations have been unhealthy and ignored for decades.

Here, three tasks loom. First, Cohen must reestablish proper standards of accountability. When car-bombers struck the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American servicemen, Secretary of Defense William Perry—and Perry alone—took responsibility in place of the commanders in the field. This was absurd. Yet it was of a piece with the blurring of command responsibility following the 1993 incident during which 18 American soldiers were killed in an urban firefight in Somalia, as well as the accidental 1994 shoot-down of Blackhawk helicopters in northern Iraq.

It is not the job of a civilian political appointee to ensure the perimeter security of American installations overseas. It most definitely is the secretary's job to hold to account those field commanders charged with that responsibility. From time to time in recent years, civilian defense chiefs have sacked senior officers for diplomatic missteps or for violating the changing norms of American society. (Recall the swiftness with which the administration dispatched Admiral Richard C. Macke, commanding all U.S. forces in the Pacific, for suggesting that U.S. Marines accused of raping a young Okinawan would have been better advised to hire a prostitute.) Comparable standards of accountability should apply in instances of operational failure. Fostered by the success of American arms in the Gulf War, the misguided reluctance to subject military performance to critical scrutiny is profoundly at odds with genuine military professionalism and serves to undermine civilian control. In this regard, Cohen's recent decision directing the Air Force to reexamine its exoneration of the general officer in charge of Khobar Towers may be a hopeful sign.

Next, Cohen must revitalize the Office of the Secretary of Defense as one step towards restoring meaningful debate over controversial defense issues inside the Pentagon. This is necessary because of the unintended consequences that flowed from the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. This landmark piece of legislation succeeded in its aim of enhancing the power and prestige of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the people who work for him. As a result, the Joint Staff

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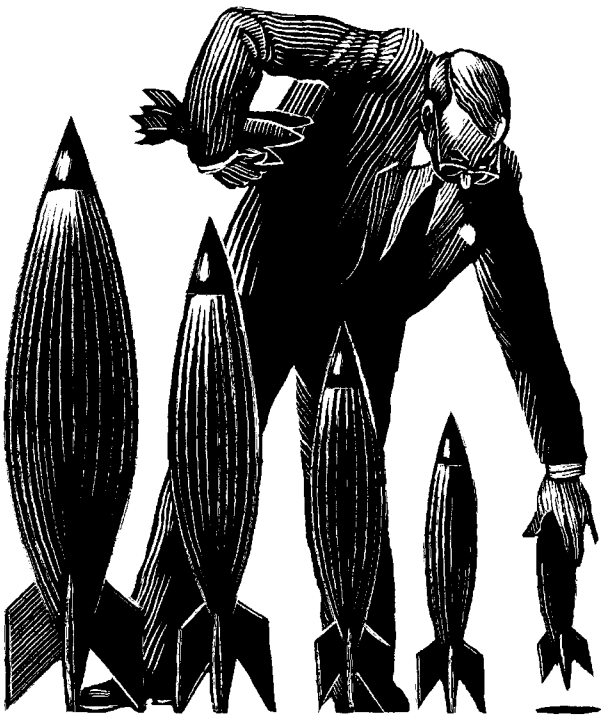
has acquired unprecedented clout and bureaucratic muscle. Attracting able and ambitious officers who report to a single, extremely powerful four-star general or admiral, it holds a near-monopoly on authoritative advice on defense matters.

By contrast, the Office of the Secretary of Defense must rely on military officers who are working there reluctantly, on civil servants who are products of a system that rewards caution rather than originality, and on political appointees able to meet the exacting tests of American public life and patient enough to endure the excruciating appointments process. The secretary's office is staffed by many able officials, but as an organization it is lamentably weak. Therefore, it hasn't been up to the demands of providing effective civilian oversight and offering an informed alternative perspective on defense policy.

The final civil-military task may be especially daunting: addressing the conflict between the traditional ethos of military professionalism and the forces of cultural change at work in American society, a problem embodied in the Tailhook scandal and its lingering aftermath.



Kevin Chadwick

A democracy cannot tolerate a military that is alienated from the larger culture. Neither can a great military power whimsically expect its soldiers to march to the cadence of every politically fashionable tune. Negotiating a new civil-military compact that preserves traditional military culture while updating it may appear to be a thankless task, but it is one that cries out for the attention of politically shrewd and forceful civilian leaders.

The first minor flap of Cohen's tenure—the "blood wings" incident involving the hazing of U.S. Marines who had just completed paratroop training—provided yet another reminder that this clash of cultural norms will not resolve itself any time soon. Cohen's response was immediate: "I intend to enforce a strict policy of zero tolerance of hazing, of sexual harassment, and of racism." Cohen was right to condemn the incident, but he might have done so in a way that signaled his appreciation for the larger military ethos. He might have distinguished between the relatively innocuous rite of passage (routine in many army airborne units until recently) to which that ethos gave birth and the perversion of that rite into deplorable physical abuse in this case.

A preferable response might have been: "This particular remnant of military ritual is unacceptable. Such practices will cease. It is no less unacceptable to tolerate any slackening in the standards of toughness, discipline, and esprit for which American Marines are noted. Therefore, I look forward to a dialogue with the senior leadership of the Marine Corps—and of all the services—aimed at insuring that we do not permit isolated instances of brutality to undermine a culture that affirms and sustains the warrior spirit."

Insisting that long-ignored issues of civil-military relations be brought to the fore is not likely to win many plaudits. Indeed, it will pose a proper test of political fortitude. The same will be true of inciting candid discussion of first-order questions of national strategy. Certainly, President Clinton himself will not take the lead on such matters, which are fraught with political risk and remote from his interests. Nor will the Pentagon bureaucracy, military or civilian, which will view action along these lines as threats to old prerogatives and arrangements.

But if the spirit of bipartisanship has any serious meaning, an independent-minded Republican welcomed into the uppermost echelon of a Democratic administration may be in a unique position to draw attention to such problems. Indeed, the success of William Cohen's tenure will hinge on his willingness to tackle them. ◆

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The Press Baroness

The Dynastic Destiny of Katharine Graham

By Noemie Emery

Katharine Graham's memoir *Personal History* is about many things: a woman, a marriage, a family, a family business, a family business whose business is politics, Washington, a breathtaking battle with a duplicitous president, a dream marriage turned nightmare, a duckling turned swan. These subjects are brought together to explore something more subtle: the peculiar workings of dynasties, of which the newspaper barons of North America are the only pure surviving form. In them, one sees the patterns by which the great houses of Europe lived. Sons of the blood are tapped early in youth to accede to great power; dowagers exercise beside-the-throne influence; sons-in-law, like William of Orange, reach the seats of great kingdoms through the blood of their wives.

The hereditary principle lives on in other industries, and has been present in national politics from the beginning, when John Adams and his son each became president, to 1992, when half of each national ticket went to the son of a senator. But politicians' children are forced at some point to achieve their own legitimacy in the eyes of voters, and other industries have only indirect bearing on national policy. The newspaper world is the only one left where true political power of a very high order is passed down completely by blood. A hereditary scion of this type may be intelligent, well trained, and hard-working, but if he is not, it hardly matters. As Nicholas Coleridge tells us in *Paper Tigers*, Arthur Sulzberger in 1963 was no one's idea of a proper publisher for the *New York Times*—not even that of his parents, who bypassed him for his sister's husband. "What is interesting is the almost arbitrary way that many of the great newspapers have changed hands," Coleridge writes. "Had his young brother-in-law, Orvil E. Dryfoos, not died of a heart attack, Punch Sulzberger would never have taken over the world's most sought after paper. . . . Had her husband, Philip Graham, not committed suicide one bleak afternoon. . . . Katharine Graham would not have become the most influencing liberal proprietor of the age." But he did, and she did, and *Personal History* is their story.

Kent Lemon

The central fact of Katharine Graham's life is that circumstances have repeatedly asked great things of her while systematically acting to break down her confidence that she could do even simple things well. "We were indeed lucky," she writes of herself and her siblings. "We had vast privileges. We had parents with solid values. Our interests were aroused in art and politics and books." And in the people, most of them famous, their parents' position brought into their lives. But at the same time, their parents found these things more interesting than their children, and often left them very much alone. Her mother, Agnes Meyer—a New Woman, who in her early twenties supported herself in the tough world of journalism—left home frequently to write and travel. Her father, Eugene Meyer, would become the owner of the *Washington Post*. Both Meyers left Westchester for Washington in 1918, leaving their children behind in a Mt. Kisco mansion to rattle around with their servants and bring themselves up. Socially isolated in palatial settings, the children had

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to guess their way through a maze of commonplace protocols that they found intimidating and unfathomable. "I was so unworldly that it was difficult for me to function," Mrs. Graham writes, telling us how she arrived at Vassar in 1934, in some ways a social illiterate, unsure how one bought, or even cared for, one's clothes.

At the same time, her parents—her mother, especially—made huge demands on the five Meyer children while giving them little instruction and even less emotional support. They were supposed to be not merely perfect, but interestingly so—eccentric, flamboyant, and dazzling. Katharine, who was none of these, thought herself awkward and slow. "The more subtle inheritance of my strange childhood was the feeling, which we all shared to some extent, of believing we were never going about things correctly," Graham writes. "Had I said the right thing? Had I the right clothes? Was I attractive? These questions were unsettling and self-absorbing, and overwhelming at times, and remained so throughout most of my adult life, until, at last, I grew impatient with dwelling on the past."

Her marriage in 1940 to Philip Graham—who had come from Florida to clerk for Felix Frankfurter on the Supreme Court, and had virtually been adopted by the jurist—made things better and worse. The girl who thought she had disappointed her parents married a man who surpassed their expectations. The girl uncertain of her social skills married a man who seemed born with all of them. The girl uncertain as to her own attractive qualities married the man everyone longed to be close to. She writes: "Phil was the fizz in our lives. . . . the fun at the dinner table. . . . He had the ideas, the jokes, and the games. . . . Everything rotated around him, and I willingly participated in keeping him at the center."

In 1933, Eugene Meyer had purchased the *Washington Post* for something under $1 million. In 1942, nearly three years after the Grahams were married, he decided to settle the paper on them. Meyer's motives, his daughter tells us, were wholly dynastic: "He saw his whole endeavor as useless unless he could project a future for the *Post* in the family." Katharine was the child most like him. He loved Philip Graham as a son. Graham had said he did not want to work for her family: He wanted a future in politics. But the paper was an opportunity, and Philip came to think he could exercise his political ambitions through its voice. He joined the *Post* in January 1946, becoming its deputy publisher. In June, President Truman asked Meyer to head the World Bank, and, at the tender age of 31, with all of five months in the newspaper business, Philip Graham became publisher. Two years later, Meyer devolved his stock on the couple. Philip had the larger share, because, as Meyer told his daughter, no man ought to work for his wife. Graham was to "buy" the stock himself, out of his *Post* salary. But he could manage this only after his wife volunteered to pay their living expenses and her mother had given him $75,000 as a gift.

Katharine Graham
Personal History
Alfred A. Knopf, 688 pp., $29.95

This sort of accession to power through marriage was not unknown in the newspaper industry: It was a given at the *New York Times*. But it troubled Graham—too much. Bright as he was, he knew that he was where he was at the whim of the Meyers. Despite Eugene Meyer's machinations to make it seem otherwise, Philip Graham worked for his wife.

Katharine seemed to sense this, and, at the same time, she helped make it worse by leaving work when their second child was born. In the beginning, he had helped her, drawing her out into the world of people and politics. But there was something different in his tone as early as 1947, when he suggested that Katharine start a weekly column to "make me a little less stupid and domestic than I have been of late."

Graham had begun to edge into manic depression, which was indistinguishable at first from his volatile temperament. His wit, always sharp, became even more cutting, seeming to seek out the weakness in people, eager to draw blood. She was not his sole target—he would later taunt presidents—but she was the first and the most frequent. He homed in on the sore spots—her looks, her wit, her social competence—that her mother had already rubbed raw. He called her "Porky," and gave her the head of a pig as a present. "When we were with friends, and I was talking, he would look at me in such a way that I felt I was . . . boring people. Gradually, I ceased talking much at all." Under his "teasing," she grew more regressive; as she grew dimmer, his "jokes" became crueler.

Even before his first serious breakdown—a paralyzing bout of depression that kept him from work for a year in 1957—the Grahams were a couple in trouble. And their problems were no longer personal matters, but of national, even worldwide, concern. The final crisis began for Katharine Graham late in December 1962, when she learned of Phil's affair with a young *Newsweek* staffer (*Newsweek*, then and now, being part of the Washington Post Co.). The final phase of his long illness had begun. For the next eight months, Katharine was a terrified witness to his deterioration before an international audience. He could still function brilliantly, in rational moments. But increasingly, his actions were deranged. Personnel of long standing were summarily fired—then hired

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again, for non-existent positions. There were abusive tirades to an understanding John Kennedy, but Lyndon Johnson dropped him after one act of harassment too many. Kennedy sent a government plane to retrieve Graham from Phoenix, where he had given a rambling speech to a publishers' meeting, in the course of which he had started to undress. Graham traveled the world with his female companion, insisting that others treat her as his consort and introducing her as his future wife. He began divorce proceedings and hatched a plan to buy Kay's stock from her.

Katharine had been paralyzed, unable fully to pity or hate him, as it was never certain what he was doing by choice and what his illness was making him do. But this threat to the dynasty jolted her out of a daze. "Kay," James Reston told her, "you have got to fight for this paper. It does not belong to Phil Graham. Your father created this paper. There is not room in Washington for two Graham families." The dynastic battle never developed. This manic mood crashed. Phil Graham came home, dismissed the young woman, and killed himself at the first opportunity, unable to face what he had done to himself and to others, much less the possibility he might do it again.

Katharine Graham was untrained for newspapering or any other business. Her father was dead. Her husband was dead. Her oldest son was a student in college, years away from maturity. The succession devolved on a traumatized 46-year-old widow, bludgeoned by scandal, bred to think herself inadequate. The dynastic crisis was at hand.

And she rose to the challenge; the consort overshadowed both her dead father and her dead husband. The girl who had once wanted to be a labor reporter broke a union in a long and bloody battle. The woman who cringed when seated next to the president for fear she would bore him took on the power of the American government. The regent—the "bridge," as she describes herself, between her son and her husband—slowly turned into the queen.

It could not have been projected that a self-doubting young woman, given to reliving the smallest of errors, could have stood up to the years of Watergate. What if the reporters made some silly error? If the story was big, why didn't others report it? What if it all was a hoax? "We were righteous, but mercifully stupid," she wrote to the paper's editor, Ben Bradlee. "We were only saved from extinction by someone mad enough not only to tape himself, but to tape himself talking about how to conceal it. Well, who would have counted on that?"

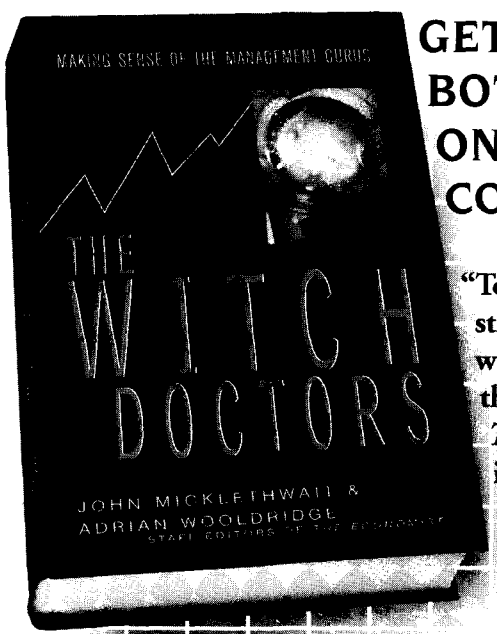
By now, she was cheerfully dissing her critics, with much of her late husband's flair. At one point, she had been assailed by Clare Boothe Luce. As Graham writes,

> In a major address to the Newspaper Publishers Association Convention, she said . . . the spirit of her late husband, Henry Luce, came to her and told her to tell the truth about Watergate. She then attacked the Post for our reporting, and for hiring 'enemies' of the President. After the speech, I told a friend that Phil Graham had appeared to me in the night, and told me to tell her to "shove it."

Graham calls Watergate the "transforming event" for herself and her paper. Alas, she is right. From the start, she says, she was aware of the "negative aspects" of the paper's coverage—the tendency to "over-involvement," the self-aggrandizing view of the press as romantic hero "defending all virtue against overwhelming odds."

In a long run-up to what is a very short account of the *Post*'s professional life after Watergate, she gives the impression she controlled and averted these dangers. Her own words show she did not. The paper that uncovered the news tried to shape news ideologically and even, in one

NATIONAL BESTSELLER



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notorious incident, invented it out of whole cloth.

The *Post* is not the only offender in the Graham empire. "We try to keep our opinions confined to the editorial page," she writes. But what, then, of *Newsweek*'s decision to run a cover story on the "Wimp Factor" the week in 1987 that George Bush launched his national campaign? "The profile of Bush had been fair and complete, but the effect of the word 'wimp' crying out from the cover on newsstands everywhere was hard to overcome," she admits. "I earnestly tried to explain [to Bush] about the complicated newsweekly process . . . but the issue never really died." Nor should it have; in part for this reason, Bush spent a year struggling against an unjust news-magazine headline. And what did the "complicated newsweekly process" have to do with the simple act of press bias? She says Bush "accurately blamed" the editors; why didn't she blame them?

When it comes to questions of her company's sense of responsibility in her most triumphant years, Graham's recollections seem out of sync with what happened for the first time in the length of this volume. It is as if she knows, but will not admit, what she has wrought. In part due to conduct Katharine Graham presided over, encouraged, and reveled in, the media have squandered the moral authority justly built up by unmasking deception.

The press, as always, is the last to know. ♦

MULTI-*KULTI*

The Rotten Pedigree of American Declinism

By Fred Siegel

Never have so many been so wrong about so much for so long with so little consequence. Starting in the mid-1960s, alarmed by Vietnam abroad and racial rebellion at home, American journalists and academics prophesied that Western liberalism—or "late capitalism," as many chose to call it—was doomed, soon to be replaced by the younger, more vital societies of the Third World.

Arthur Herman
The Idea of Decline in Western History
Free Press, 521 pp., $30

It was not a monolithic ideology. On one hand, there were *cultural* pessimists like Susan Sontag, who saw the West as a "cancer" whose extinction offered promise to the rest of the world. The journalist I. F. Stone concurred, welcoming Khomeini's revolution in Iran as a sign that the Third World was escaping the dead hand of the First. On the other hand, *historical* pessimists like Kevin Phillips decried the decline—but were just as sure the West was on the way down. In 1975 Daniel Patrick Moynihan noted the fears of many that liberal democracy was "a holdover form of government . . . which has simply no relevance for the future. It is where the world was, not where it is going."

By 1988, the Yale historian Paul Kennedy was claiming in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* that an overextended United States was in irremediable decline. It was "the task facing American statesman over the next decades to manage affairs so that the relative erosion of the United States's position takes place slowly and smoothly," Kennedy wrote.

A year later the Berlin Wall fell.

In *The Idea of Decline in Western History*, George Mason University historian Arthur Herman notes that these thinkers were dead wrong. But he also makes a more audacious claim: that, far from being pathbreakers, the declinists fit squarely into an old—and disreputable—strain of European intellectual history. Western theories of Progress, whether Darwinian or Whig or materialist, have always implied their own underside: The triumph of one species or bloc or class in any struggle inevitably means reversals for another. But that hardly implied that the West is moribund. Those who thought it did were merely partaking of a hoary tradition that has its roots in the "scientific" racism of the 19th century and its firmest adherents in the multiculturalists of today.

"What intrigued the 19th-century imagination even before Darwin," Herman writes, "was race theory's proposition that the *natural* history of man as a biological species had also produced the *cultural* history of mankind as social and creative beings." In his influential *Essay on the Inequality of Races* (1853), Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau united theories of the "Aryan" nature of Europe with the Romantics' critique of bourgeois culture as philistine and enervating. For Gobineau, history was at once a racial and a cultural struggle—between the remnants of the original Indo-Aryan aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie. The victory of the bourgeoisie would ring down the curtain on European greatness. If proof were needed, observers had simply to look across late-19th-century Europe, where the growth of mining and heavy industry had creat-

Fred Siegel is the author of The Future Once Happened Here: New York, Washington, Los Angeles and the Fate of Big-City America, *forthcoming from Free Press.*

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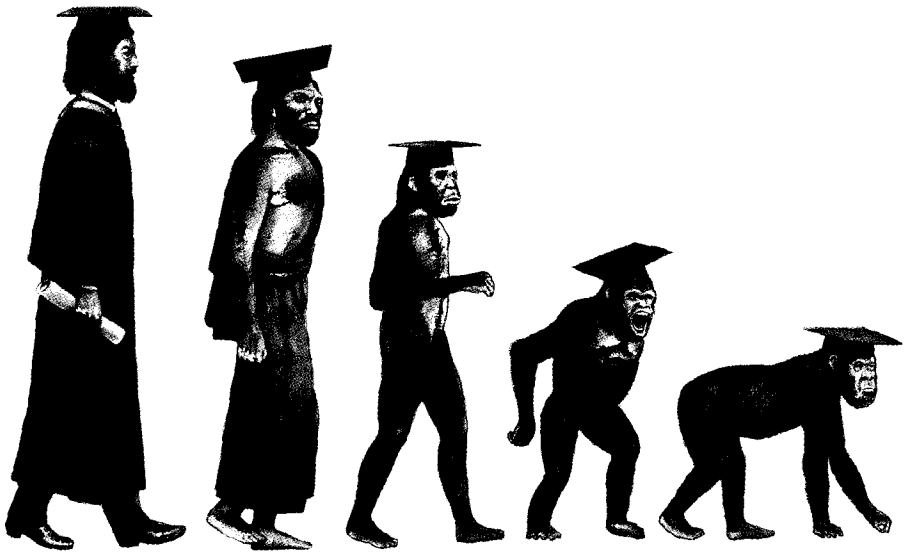

Kevin Chadwick

ed a population of human dray-horses, people so unrecognizably impoverished as to appear a separate species—and a degenerate one.

It is the German schoolteacher Oswald Spengler who cast the die of modern declinism. And yet, by the time Spengler began publishing the *Decline of the West* in 1918, he was summing up a half-century of writing about Europe's degeneration. Spengler saw history as an inexorable natural process, immune to the interventions of human will. For Spengler, peoples were like individuals. Every historical culture has an "inner life force," and moves through its own childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. His key contrast was between *Kultur* and civilization. "Cultures"—young, vigorous, and connected to their roots through myth and folktales—age into "civilizations," and as they do they become neurotic, sclerotic, parasitic, out of touch with their life-giving origins, and ready to die.

As Herman shows, Spengler's distinction between vital "culture" and decadent Enlightenment civilization drives the thinking of a variety of mid- and late-20th-century thinkers, from Frankfurt School Marxists like Herbert Marcuse and Theodore Adorno to such faddish Francophone thinkers of the 1960s and '70s as Frantz Fanon. Many of today's radicals—critical Marxists, multiculturalists, postmodernists or radical environmentalists—draw as much from the Spenglerian right as they do from the intellectual antecedents they actually acknowledge. And this is not to mention those idols of the postwar left, such as Jean Genet and Michel Foucault, who were drawn not only to the Spenglerian view of culture but also to the power and violence of fascism, of which his declinism formed a component. So capacious, in fact, is Herman's argument that it could easily embrace such British writers as George Bernard Shaw, who thought mass man so hideous that "if we desire a certain type of civilization and culture, we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit in."

In his most important chapter, Herman shows that Spengler's opposition of culture and civilization is central to the thought of America's preeminent black intellectual, W.E.B. Du Bois. As a graduate student in Germany, Du Bois grew a Kaiser Bill mustache and was attracted to both German socialism and *völkisch* arguments about the merits of German *Kultur* compared with Western European civilization. It was a theme he adopted in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), where he treated black spirituals as the key to an African-American folk culture. Echoing Spengler's distrust of "soulless Americanism" and "the worship of technical skill, money and an eye for facts," Du Bois insisted that the aristocratic African-American capacity for "sleep and laughter" was superior to the rootless mechanization of white America—and laid out the arguments for preserving racial purity that are now standard on campuses. In fact, there is little in the current repertoire of afrocentric assertions that Du Bois *didn't* lay out. For Du Bois, who would later become a Communist, Marxist ideas of progress floated in a sea of cultural pessimism. In this he hardly differed from the white leftists of his time or ours.

Although specialists will find fault with particular sections of a book so wide-ranging, Herman has tapped into a rich vein of inquiry. His book should trigger a long-overdue scholarly debate, but don't bet on it. Not even the fall of communism could convince the academy of its wholesale failure to diagnose the relative health of the West. Sovietologists have gone back to churning out accounts about social mobility under Stalin, and a host of recent books from the left (like Cornel West's *Race Matters*) and the right (like Edward Luttwak's *The Endangered American Dream*) continue to insist, against the evidence, on our impending doom. ♦

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FOR THE LOVE OF ABORTIONS

Janet Hadley Pleads for More

By Francis X. Rocca

Janet Hadley is not "pro-choice," she is pro-abortion. In *Abortion: Between Freedom and Necessity*, her survey of abortion law and practice around the world, she scorns talk of necessary evils and last resorts. Abortion is an essential means of freeing women from "male-supremacist society." Ending a pregnancy should not require the excuse of rape or contraceptive failure. Under the right conditions, it is safer and more comfortable than many other kinds of birth control. With proper counseling, it can even be a "self-affirming" and "tremendously positive experience."

In Hadley's view, questions of abortion's rightness or wrongness should now be giving way to strategies for maximizing its practice. Hadley, a British journalist and abortion activist, is dissatisfied even with the Netherlands, where abortion is safe, legal, and rare. It's the rarity that bothers her, for it means that a stress on contraception has left a "stigma" on abortion.

But there's an irony here: Hadley is so sure that the moral questions of abortion have been settled that she feels free to highlight the least appealing aspects of the procedure she exalts. The result is a pro-abortion book that will harden the convictions of pro-lifers. It may even convince others that the reality behind "pro-choice" sloganeering is grisly and barbaric beyond their worst imaginings.

From India, for example, Hadley draws the following vignette:

> "Boy or girl? We tell you with 100 per cent accuracy," proclaims the roadside poster outside Ludhiana, in the northern state of Punjab. "Save 50,000 rupees later by spending 500 rupees now." All over India, there are clinics performing amniocentesis and ultrasound scans, even in districts too poor to afford supplies of clean drinking water. Every day an estimated 3,000 female fetuses are aborted. And there are doctors making a mint.

Such use of abortion, Hadley admits, poses a dilemma for feminists, who seemingly must choose between women's freedom and women's survival. But Hadley thinks women have few choices in any male-dominated society, and India, where families must pay ruinous dowries to marry off their daughters, is harder on women than most. China, where the notorious one-child policy has meant forced abortions and sterilizations for women and a steep drop in the female birthrate, provides an even more clear-cut case for Hadley's feminist critique.

Janet Hadley
Abortion
Between Freedom and Necessity
Temple, 250 pp., $27.95

Turning to the developed world, Hadley is unflinching in her descriptions of abortion practice. She sees, for example, the eugenic implications of genetic screening, which doctors now tout as a "responsible" precaution for any pregnant woman. The ability to prevent imperfect children is quickly evolving into an obligation, so that in Britain today, 92 percent of fetuses with Down syndrome get aborted. Hadley also notes the tendency of population-control propagandists to target racial and ethnic minorities. Even a supposedly conservative institution may routinely offer women incentives to abort. Until recently, pregnant women in the British military had to choose between abortion and discharge. Pro-life conservatives should ponder such cases as they take on the problems of illegitimacy and welfare dependency, lest easy solutions bring unintended consequences.

Shocking as Hadley's own reporting is, none of it leads her to question the morality of abortion *per se*. Her worries, rather, tend to be over such issues as the "stigmatizing" effect on those who slip through genetic screening.

Hadley's field observations lead to her larger project: a positive defense of abortion, in effect a governing philosophy for the abortion culture. To get to that she must first consider the philosophical case of her opponents. Hadley lays out the pro-life side fairly enough, but her reading of the mentality behind it is a slanderous caricature. Pro-lifers are "God's bullies," who have followed up their victories in Reagan's America by undoing decades of progress in the former Soviet bloc. Their opposition to abortion stems from nothing but a desire to quash female sexual freedom and uphold patriarchy. To arguments on the grounds of fetal personhood, she replies that personhood is "a social construct," inapplicable to the pre- (and even the recently post-) natal. Technical viability is irrelevant when the real point is the "social sustainability" of life. Once Hadley has established that proposition, she can dismiss pro-life warnings of a "slippery slope" to infanticide as quibbles.

Having thus disposed of the moral case against abortion, Hadley lays out her abortion manifesto. She finds the notion of rights inadequate to the task, not least because it follows from "the male-dominated western tradition of individualism and property

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rights." Moreover, the debate between a "right to choose" and a "right to life" yields a draw at best. The health argument—that prohibition will not stop abortion, but only lead to an "epidemic" of back-alley deaths—has proved more politically effective, but Hadley distrusts it, too. She worries that framing abortion as a health matter takes authority away from women and hands it to physicians, who might not always agree with their patients on the status of fetal life.

Instead, Hadley casts about for a "feminist morality of abortion." From the Harvard "difference feminist" Carol Gilligan she borrows the idea of an "'ethic of care,' rooted in the concerns of daily life rather than in abstract universal axioms," whereby a woman may put her responsibilities to others, or even to herself, ahead of those to her unborn child. Hadley also invokes Rosalind Petchesky's theory that it is the pregnant woman who, in growing aware of her relationship to her fetus, bestows personhood on it. This "allows for the possibility of including the late fetus and the newborn within the moral framework," which seems to mean that a given abortion could actually be wrong. But of that only the woman herself, due to her "unique relationship to the fetus," can be the judge.

Hadley is willing to state categorically: "It is surely as outrageous to abort a female fetus, following prenatal diagnosis, as to practice female infanticide." Yet she would not forbid even this. Someday, once gender inequalities are gone, it might be safe to reopen the question of when abortion is right or wrong, and "to bring the political and the moral closer together." But for now, Hadley thinks, to outlaw abortion under any circumstance or for any reason would be to give ground in an all-out war.

For this country, Hadley's vision of routine, unregulated abortion seems no more likely than a full ban. Most Americans do not believe that killing a two-week-old embryo is murder, but neither are they comfortable with crushing the skull and sucking out the brains of a nearly born baby, even one with "defects." And yet, if the only voices were those of compromise, it would be too easy to forget what we are really talking about when we talk about abortion. Janet Hadley's enlightening and repugnant book reminds us of what is at stake, no less than the clinic-picketing "fanatics" she so despises. ♦

WE'RE SITTING DUCKS!

Literary War Games and Their Discontents

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

After tanks, subversion, and vodka, perhaps the greatest export of the Soviet Union was the "socialist realism" novel. These candy-coated political tracts, which enjoyed a vogue on college campuses for half a century, were concerned less with plot elaboration than with hitting the reader repeatedly over the head with a blunt message. In novels titled *Steel*, *Wheat*, or *Cement*, the story always proceeds along the same lines—girl meets boy, boy falls in love with some revolutionary harvesting technique. Now, with the publication of Caspar Weinberger's *The Next War* (co-authored by Peter Schweizer), the socialist-realism canon has received a contribution from an unlikely figure—a former secretary of defense who helped consign to the dustbin of history the regime that popularized this tedious genre.

Caspar Weinberger and Peter Schweizer
The Next War
Regnery, 470 pp., $27.50

The Next War is a collection of "literary war games" intended to dramatize the point that "what we have today is a military that is a shadow of its former self." In five fictional war scenarios, the authors cite our current demobilization as the source of future battlefield catastrophes and warn that we must spend more on defense if our soldiers are to avoid the fates of those described in the book. They have incorporated detailed tables, weapons diagrams, and orders of battle—most of them authentic—into a Tom Clancy-esque narrative, replete with fictional characters to "demonstrate the human and psychological dimensions of conflict."

Despite the sensationalist format, with the military bracing for a new round of force reductions and budget cuts, the thesis of *The Next War* merits serious consideration. According to Weinberger and Schweizer, "The U.S. force that defeated Saddam Hussein no longer exists." Procurement spending is at a 40-year low, while the defense budget consumes a smaller share of GDP than it has at any time since 1940. The size of the armed forces has been cut by a third since the end of the Cold War, and projects to modernize weaponry have suffered as defense funds are diverted to social programs. At the same time, due to more frequent overseas deployments, operational demands on the military have increased dramatically.

The body of the book—400 pages of apocalyptic war stories—merely

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dramatizes the claims presented in the 13-page introduction. In the first scenario, American troops battle North Korean and Chinese forces, only to be attacked with nuclear and biological weapons. ("Conclusion: Failure to expand American military capabilities and support the procurement of advanced weapons systems by Taiwan will doom the United States to further defeat in Asia.")

Next comes a war with Iran that features an Iranian nuclear strike on Italy. Later, an immigrant invasion of the United States is followed by a U.S. invasion of Mexico ("Conclusion: The United States must work aggressively to construct a deep, effective HUMINT network in Latin America and elsewhere.")

Then Russia conquers Western Europe and rains nuclear warheads down on NATO forces. In the final chapter, a trade war with Japan quickly spins out of control when the Japanese sabotage the New York Stock Exchange and resume their World War II conquests in the South Pacific.

To ensure that even the most imperceptive reader will understand where the blame rests for these battlefield fiascos, the authors have constructed the scenarios using a wooden prose style that barely conceals the nuts and bolts of their thesis. Thus, to emphasize the future impact of present force reductions, the secretary of defense lectures the president, "Victory is going to be very difficult indeed. As you already know, we don't have the same armed forces that won Desert Storm."

Similarly, in a plug for the intelligence community, Gen. Mark Chain, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1999, explains, "During the past five years we have made cuts in HUMINT, trying to rely instead on national technical means. . . . We have thousands of chicken inspectors working for the USDA, but hardly anyone is inspecting the nuclear missile sites of our enemies." If indeed war is hell, passages such as these suggest that the "literary war game" is something like purgatory.

The Next War has already made ripples in the debate over future defense spending; members of Congress have cited it in hearings, and Bob Dole even plugged an advance copy on the campaign trail. But the book's cartoonish presentation makes it unlikely to have an enduring impact.

This is a shame, for beneath the overheated pedantry lies a convincing argument for rebuilding the nation's neglected defenses. If only the authors had made their case minus the theatrics, they might have changed the minds of a few legislators—the audience for which this book should have been intended. Rather than present five scenarios that end in what is essentially a single catastrophic outcome, Weinberger and Schweizer might have considered making the scenarios more plausible by designing a single case with three variations, only one of which would have been a worst-case scenario. Or the authors could have expanded their sober and well-argued introduction and dispensed with the nightmarish fables altogether. This, of course, would have meant attempting to persuade, rather than frighten, the reader into supporting an otherwise sensible position. It probably would also have meant writing an op-ed rather than a book. ♦

WALLOWING IN THE CRUD

At Peace with American Architecture

By Steven Lagerfeld

Craig Whitaker
Architecture and the American Dream
Clarkson N. Potter, 308 pp., $40

Few things have been more thoroughly abused by critics than the American landscape. Surveying our endless interstates, our sprawling subdivisions, our chaotic commercial strips, and our haggard cities, architects and urban planners have seen the embodiment of all that is wrong with crass, commercial American culture. One of these critics recently summed it all up in one word: We live, he declared, in a "crudscape."

Often accompanying this withering view is a semi-theological doctrine, two parts fact and one part conspiracy theory, about how things came to this sorry pass. It begins, in most popular tellings, during the 1920s with the auto industry, led by General Motors, buying up healthy big-city trolley systems and ruthlessly destroying them in order to enlarge the market for buses and cars. It continues with malign efforts to undermine the railroads and mass transit and culminates in the dark forces' masterstroke, the Interstate Highway Act of 1956. This assured that Americans, despite their better natures, would leave the cities and scatter over the countryside, polluting the landscape with their tawdry split-levels and fast-food palaces.

If you follow this theory to its logical conclusion, then the American landscape as we know it is little more than a big mistake, a disaster inflicted by powerful outside forces. It is, in a word, un-American, so we are under no obligation to understand it, much less to love it. The critics who put forward this point are as numer-

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ous as the buildings they deplore. With some notable exceptions, however, few of them have workable ideas about what to build for a country whose people generally do not want to live in traditional cities, no matter how much designers wish otherwise.

Yet there is also a critical tradition of looking at American cities, suburbs, and highway culture sympathetically, if not always lovingly. Its practitioners include the late J.B. Jackson and the great landscape historian and writer-architects such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Vincent Scully, and Witold Rybczynski. Craig Whitaker, a New York architect, has thoroughly absorbed their lessons and added a few of his own. He argues that the American landscape is no accident, that the very sameness that critics deride when they compare a Miracle Mile or a suburban subdivision outside Houston with others near Cleveland is proof that important cultural values are at work in our architecture. They may not be distinctive places, but they are distinctively American—unlike anything one would find in the outskirts of Milan or Oslo or London.

Two good examples of this American exceptionalism on the ground are the gridded city and what Whitaker insists is its functional equivalent, the suburban subdivision structured around curved streets. Both of these forms earn the condemnation of many designers, who complain that a grid renders all streets more or less equal, foreclosing the possibility of creating the broad diagonal boulevards that in European cities lead to important public plazas and buildings. But that, says Whitaker, is exactly the point. The grid and its suburban counterpart are well suited to a democratic and egalitarian society. All streets are equal, and so are the building lots that line them, while more important buildings are distinguished by subtle alterations in the spaces separating them from other structures and from the road. On the few occasions when they have tried to borrow Europe's "authoritarian symbols and patterns," designers have been forced to reverse course, as Pierre L'Enfant famously did when he laid a grid over his much grander basic design of 1791 for the nation's capital.

Whitaker is at his best in understanding the car's importance in American culture and showing how it has shaped what we build and how we build it. In most writing on the subject, the car is styled the scourge of the landscape, the mechanical manifestation of a shadowy, maleficent corporate capitalism. That is one reason why anti-car polemics are such a staple of this literature and why ritual denunciations of the automobile continue to roll from the presses with regularity. (This year's model is the forthcoming *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back*, by Jane Holtz Kay, architecture critic for the *Nation*.)

WHITAKER DOESN'T RUN FROM THE FACT THAT AMERICANS LOVE THEIR CARS, AND MOBILITY IN GENERAL.

Whitaker, by contrast, doesn't run from the fact that Americans love their cars, and mobility in general. Our world is shaped, he says, for a people on the move. Those grand European-style boulevards that terminate in huge public spaces don't work in the United States partly because they slow down the traffic. "The focus of the American experience was not buildings or monuments at the end of the road but the road itself," he observes. The Arc de Triomphe in Paris is a destination standing at the intersection of 12 roads; the nearly identical Memorial Arch in New York's Washington Square Park merely marks "a pause between the end of an important street and the beginning of a park—people want to go through the arch, not to it."

Whether the road is Fifth Avenue or the wildly developed Route 30 commercial strip, which connects two interstates in Breezewood, Penn., Whitaker says, the logic is the same. The jumble of signs, buildings, and empty spaces creates a jazzy, uniquely American rhythm for the passing motorist as certainly as rows of trees define more sedate streets. In keeping with his principle that we should honor the journey, not the destination, Whitaker even suggests that planners pay attention to the size and spacing of signs and billboards in order to manipulate the highway's rhythms. Signs can also add drama and interest to suburban intersections, he points out. "While one gas station with a tall sign is entirely forgettable, four gas stations of similar size with similar signs, one on each corner, are memorable." We need, in other words, to create much of our sense of place on the road.

Whitaker sometimes seems a little *too* eager to understand the American environment, too reluctant to ponder ways in which we can strengthen our civic life through design. For all their enchantment with convenience and the open road, Americans today seem to be increasingly interested in community, and the social and architectural infrastructure of community is not easily reconciled with that of the road. Yet Whitaker is right that the great task before our architects is to recognize the uniquely American characteristics that have shaped our landscape and use them "to ennoble the journey as well as to create a sense of community along the way—rather than to hope we will someday change who we are." ♦

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PANEL TO SEEK TESTIMONY FROM GAUTAMA BUDDHA

SUBPOENA ISSUED TO DIVINITY

"Enlightened One" Gave Thousands to Democratic National Committee, Senate Probers Say

By STEPHEN LABATON

WASHINGTON Feb. 17 — Senate investigators today announced plans to question Gautama Buddha, the 6th century, B.C., spiritual teacher and Divine Being, about large contributions made to the Democratic National Committee.

"We have new evidence that The Buddha was a pretty heavy giver, and we're not talking about his weight problem," said Senator Fred D. Thompson (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, which has issued a subpoena for the portly prophet, known to some as "Siddhartha."

Attorneys for the Democratic National Committee denied any intentional wrongdoing, even as newly disclosed documents and e-mail messages reveal that at a single fundraiser in April 1996 one "Sidney Arthur Buddha" gave $140,000 to the Democratic Party. Eyewitnesses to the payment describe experiencing "a kind of spiritual awakening" as the check was handed over, though they also describe "a kind of spiritual dozing off" when Vice President Al Gore subsequently delivered a speech.

The DNC has since returned the funds and has conceded that an error was made.

Under U.S. law, tax-exempt religious groups are not permitted to make political donations. In addition, as a non-citizen, the Indian-born prophet could not legally donate money to any American political party. Furthermore, as a Supreme Being residing beyond the karmic wheel of birth, suffering, and death, the Buddha may have been present in the United States illegally.

While acknowledging that his staff had been warned about the fund-raising event, Vice President Gore strongly denied knowing that Mr. Buddha was The Buddha when he shook hands with him. "We just did not realize the scope of the problem," said an aide to the Vice President. "After all, chanting and incense burning are not uncommon at our events."

"In retrospect, we should have noticed that the contribution came from an individual bearing the miraculous 32 marks of the Enlightened One," the aide continued. "If not that, then the adhesive name tag he was wearing, which said 'Hello, my name is . . . The Lord Buddha.'" Democratic party workers will now be issued small statues in the Buddha's likeness to help identify him at future gatherings.

In addition to trying to determine the source and purpose of the Buddha's donations, Senator Thompson is expected to inquire into an internal DNC memorandum entitled, "The Sutra of the Perfect Gem of the Pure Lotus of the One True Dharma of Campaign Financing." This document, which may explain how campaign contributions from foreign countries were funneled to the Democratic Party, is also alleged to include some useful *feng shui* tips and several good tofu recipes.

Other Eastern religious organizations, including Taoists for Clinton-Gore and Jain-PAC, a Jainist group, have denied any involvement in the widening scandal. The actor Richard Gere also denied

Continued on Page B11, Column 2

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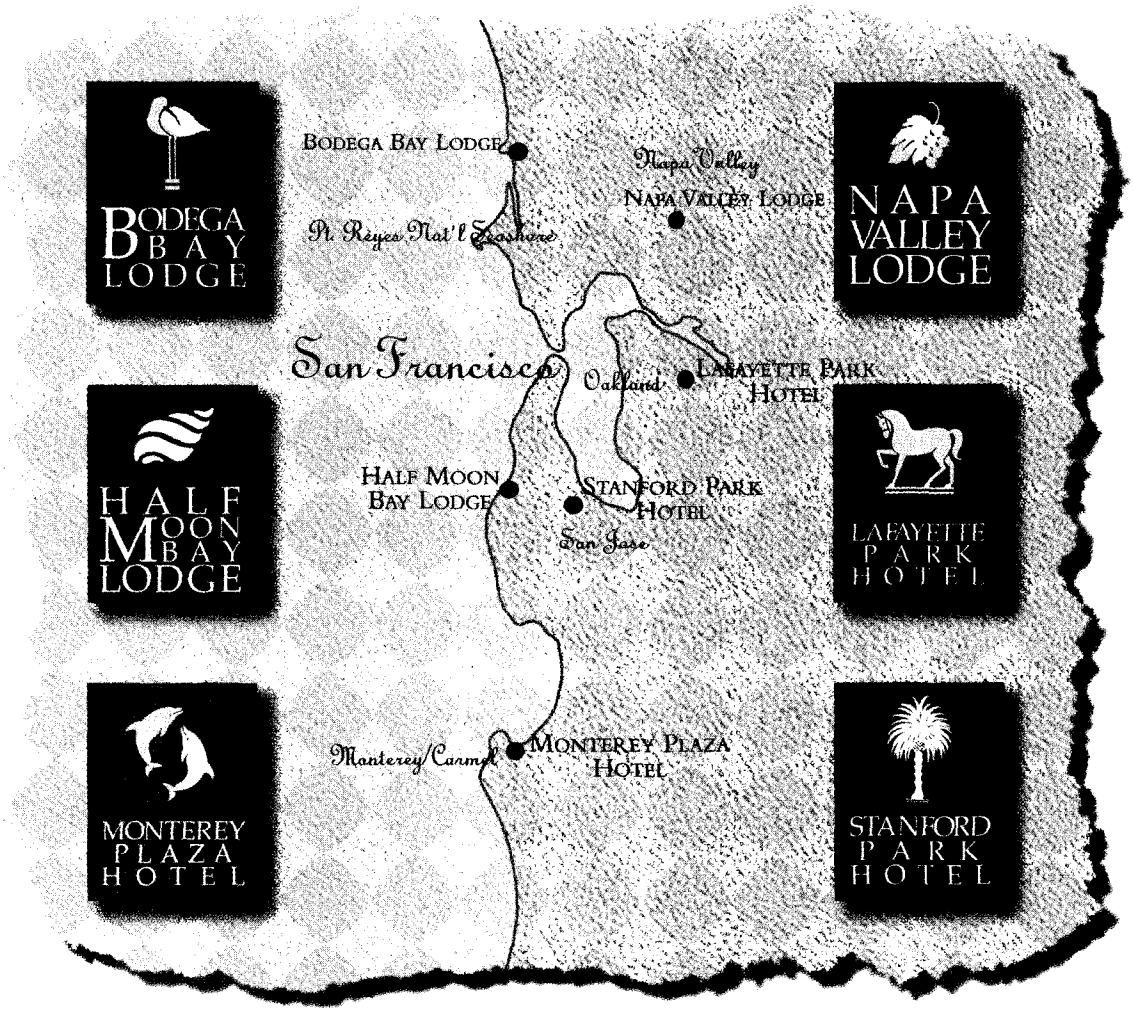

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